

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 201: A Peaceful Visit Turns Deadly[ 1,146 words ]

### *Chapter 201: A Peaceful Visit Turns Deadly*

The inner garden was peaceful, filled with the scent of medicinal herbs and warmed by the sun.

Mu Yuelan sat beneath a blossom tree, a delicate zither resting beside her as she sipped a cup of fragrant tea.

Her robe was light blue, trimmed with silver vine embroidery, and her long black hair shimmered under the light. She looked peaceful, yet refined—like a moonlit lake.

As footsteps approached, her head tilted slightly. Then her eyes widened.

"...Zihan'er?"

Her voice was a mix of surprise and disbelief.

The next second, she was already up.

"Zihan'er!"

She rushed across the garden like a gentle breeze—then, like a bolt of wind, swept her son into a tight embrace before he could even brace for it.

"ARGH!"

Bai Zihan almost suffocated under his mother's embrace.

"You've gotten taller again! But you—why are you so thin? Are you not eating well?"

She leaned back slightly, gripping his shoulders as she scanned his face with intense scrutiny, then pinched his cheek.

"Look at this complexion! You're pale! Missing sleep? Are you cultivating too hard again?!"

Bai Zihan's lips twitched helplessly.

To be honest, anyone could tell that he was doing better than before, especially with his ascension to the Soul Formation Realm.

And as cultivators, what is not eating? What is missing sleep?

Those things didn't affect them much. Even if one went over the limit, there were pills to solve those problems.

He knew his mother was overreacting, as always.

"...Mother, I'm fine!"

"Fine?! You call this fine?"

She huffed, brushing a strand of hair from his face.

"I swear, if you've lost even a single jin of weight since last year—"

Ahem!

Mu Qingyuan cleared his throat with a slightly awkward expression from a few steps away.

"Sister, maybe let the boy breathe? He didn't come all the way here just to get pinched to death."

Mu Yuelan reluctantly let go but kept one hand protectively on Zihan's shoulder as she turned, a bit sheepishly.

"Right, right. Sorry. I was just... surprised. I wasn't expecting him."

She glanced back at Zihan.

"But I'm so happy you came. I missed you so much."

"I missed you too."

Bai Zihan said, offering a small smile.

"Well," Qingyuan said with a grin, "your nephew has something to ask you."

"Oh?"

She turned her full attention back to her son, eyes gleaming.

"What is it, Zihan'er? Whatever you need, just say the word."

Bai Zihan rubbed the back of his neck.

"I came to invite you," he said. "To celebrate my birthday."

Mu Yuelan blinked—then her eyes widened in realization.

"Your birthday... of course!"

She clasped her hands together, a proud gleam lighting her face.

"How could I forget?! Don't worry, Zihan—I've already prepared two gifts for you. One for this year—and one to make up for missing last year."

Her voice was practically bubbling with excitement.

"You're going to love them. I promise! I've been working on one of them for over a year—it's not just rare, it's perfectly suited for you!"

"You really didn't have to go that far..."

"Nonsense!"

She waved her hand sharply.

"It's your birthday! My baby boy's birthday! You only turn this age once, and I won't let anyone say the Mu Clan doesn't know how to dote on their own!"

"...Baby boy?"

Bai Zihan muttered, horrified.

He was already turning 17, and many people would tremble at the mention of his name. Still being called a baby boy by his mother was another kind of tribulation.

Mu Qingyuan couldn't help but laugh, shaking his head.

"Sister, enough already. He's not five anymore. He's almost an adult! A Soul Formation Realm cultivator, no less—and already engaged, too!"

The laughter died instantly.

Mu Yuelan froze, eyes narrowing.

"Engaged?"

Mu Qingyuan blinked.

A beat of silence passed.

"Oh no!"

He immediately looked away, sipping his tea a little too quickly and pretending to admire the flowers blooming at the edge of the courtyard.

Mu Yuelan turned back to her son, her grip tightening slightly on his shoulder.

"Zihan'er," she said slowly. "What was that about?"

"You mean about me being engaged?"

"Yes!"

"Well... yeah. I was engaged last year."

"You were what?"

She said in a quiet voice, the pitch dangerously even.

"Yeah! Didn't Father inform you?"

He looked confused, scratching his cheek.

"He did not," Mu Yuelan hissed through gritted teeth.

Then her gaze shifted—not to rage, but to something colder and far more dangerous: maternal indignation.

"That man really—he dares arrange something this important without even speaking to me?!"

Mu Yuelan's lips curled into a cold, dangerous smile—one that sent shivers down Bai Zihan's spine.

"He really asked for it."

Her spiritual Qi surged slightly, the surrounding herbs trembling as if sensing their mistress's fury.

"Mother—?"

Before Bai Zihan could say anything else, Mu Yuelan stood up, her sleeves flicking with a crisp snap as she turned on her heel.

"I'll kill him!"

With that declaration, she soared into the air in a flash of light-blue robes, wind billowing behind her.

Her hair fluttered like a comet's tail as she flew off across the estate, vanishing beyond the distant pavilions.

Bai Zihan stood frozen for a second.

(Did she really just say she was going to kill Father?)

He didn't understand why she was this angry. Sure, getting engaged without telling her wasn't ideal—but to threaten murder over it?

(Wait, actually... knowing their relationship, maybe I do understand.)

Bai Zihan rubbed his temples.

His parents' relationship had already been walking a tightrope for years.

He had thought that with the matter of Bai Xinyue's Dao Bone finally resolved, the tension between them would fade—but this might only make things worse.

He needed to stop her.

He spun on his heel and ran down the stone path.

"Grand Elder!"

He reached the Main Hall where Bai Ren was still enjoying a cup of medicinal tea, sighing in comfort.

"Ah, Zihan? What is it—?"

Bai Ren asked, seeing that Bai Zihan was in a hurry.

"We have a problem!"

The old man frowned, placing the teacup down.

"What kind of problem?"

"Mother stormed off saying she's going to kill Father!"

Bai Ren blinked.

Then he stood up slowly.

"Oh dear! Did things escalate to this point?"

"I think we should go back. Right now!"

The Grand Elder stroked his beard, then sighed.

"Yeah, we should!"

He looked at Bai Zihan.

"Well? What are you waiting for? Gather the guards. We'll take the ship back immediately before she gets there first."

"You're the one sitting!"

"Don't talk back to your elders! Go, go!"

The peaceful day at the Mu Clan suddenly turned into a flurry of motion as Bai Zihan and Grand Elder Bai Ren quickly gathered their escort.

Whatever was waiting back at the Bai Clan... it certainly wasn't going to be peaceful.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 202: When Wives Rage and Husbands Panic[ 1,034 words ]

### *Chapter 202: When Wives Rage and Husbands Panic*

The flying ship cut through the sky with its full speed like it was going to a war though it only stopped a single person.

Although the Flying-Ship was going at full-speed, Mu Yuelan's speed was even faster.

And with her Void Refinement Realm, there was no need for her to worry about her Qi depleting just from flying.

Bai Zihan stood near the front of the vessel, arms crossed, brow furrowed as he stared ahead at the endless stretch of clouds.

The Bai Clan's territory was still a distance away, but every second they wasted felt like another step closer to disaster.

Behind him, Grand Elder Bai Ren leaned lazily against the railing, arms tucked inside his sleeves, looking far too relaxed given the situation.

"Shouldn't you be doing something?"

Bai Zihan asked, finally breaking the silence.

"Hm?"

Bai Ren opened one eye.

"I mean, shouldn't you go and stop mother?"

Bai Zihan continued.

"She's heading to kill Father. That sounds like something a Grand Elder should get involved in."

Bai Ren sighed, stroking his beard.

"Even if I stop her temporarily, what then? She'll still be angry. The issue will still be there. Delaying a confrontation doesn't remove the conflict—it just makes it explode later. Better to let them solve it themselves."

Bai Zihan stared at him.

"That's your excuse?"

"Excuse? It's wisdom, boy!"

Bai Ren grinned.

Bai Zihan let out a long breath and looked away.

But even as he complained, he knew the Grand Elder had a point.

He wouldn't have gotten involved either—if the whole mess didn't revolve around him.

He ran a hand through his hair in frustration.

"Damn it! Mother is speeding up again."

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It took less than a fourth of the time to return to the Bai Clan from the Mu Clan than it had taken to travel the other way.

And the reason was obvious.

Mu Yuelan was flying furiously, blazing through the sky, her spiritual aura sweeping across the clouds like a raging storm.

She soon reached the gates of the Bai Clan Estate, which were heavily guarded by powerful cultivators.

At first, some guards instinctively assumed it was an attack and prepared to stop her.

But the moment they recognized who it was—Mu Yuelan—they quickly froze.

As the wife of the Clan Leader and someone of high status, none of them dared block her path, especially when she was this furious.

"Tsk!"

Bai Zihan clicked his tongue in annoyance, watching the guards timidly step aside.

He understood their hesitation... but still found it pathetic.

Though, truth be told, he probably would've done the same in their shoes.

"I'm going after her!"

Bai Zihan declared, leaping from the flying ship and heading straight for his father's study.

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Inside the Bai Clan – Bai Tianheng's Study

BANG!

The heavy double doors of the Clan Leader's study exploded open, slamming against the walls with a deafening crash.

Wood splinters scattered across the floor as a gust of spiritual pressure flooded the hallways.

Bai Tianheng, seated behind his jade-inlaid desk, immediately rose to his feet.

He had been calmly reviewing clan records—but now his eyes narrowed, sharp and wary.

"Who dares—"

His words cut off as he recognized the figure standing in the wrecked doorway.

"Yuelan?!"

Mu Yuelan didn't spare him a greeting.

"BAI TIANHENG!"

Her voice roared like thunder.

In a flash, she crossed the room and grabbed him by the collar of his robes, yanking him forward with such force he nearly toppled over the desk.

"What are you—?!"

Bai Tianheng staggered, stunned.

Even as a cultivator in the Great Ascension Realm, he had been completely caught off guard.

His wife—though still in the Void Refinement Realm—was clearly just a step away from breaking through, and her strength showed it.

He stared at her, stunned.

Not even when he scolded her when she had taken Bai Xinyue's Dao Bone to give to Bai Zihan had she reacted like this.

His heart sank.

(What did Zihan do this time?)

Of course, that was his assumption based on how angry his wife was.

Their son had grown bolder lately, but had he caused something serious enough for Yuelan to fly across the empire in full rage?

"Wait! Yuelan! Calm down—just tell me what happened!"

"You dare ask what happened?!"

She shouted, her spiritual pressure flaring again. The walls creaked from the strain.

Bai Tianheng's mind raced.

"Did someone attack the Mu Clan?"

"No!"

She shook him again.

"Then what? Did Zihan cause some disaster?"

"NO!"

"Then what in the heavens—?!"

"You arranged our son's engagement behind my back!"

"..."

Silence!

Utter silence!

Bai Tianheng froze.

Mu Yuelan's grip tightened.

"I had my reasons." Bai Tianheng replied cautiously.

"Oh? Please, pray tell."

She said, tone dripping with sarcasm.

He cleared his throat.

"First of all... you know Zihan's position as heir has always been shaky. Many elders have questioned him. This engagement with Chu Ziyang would solidify his status and provide a powerful ally. She's talented, and she could help protect him in the future."

"So you arranged a political marriage to secure power for the clan."

She smiled coldly. "Basically, you're selling off my son to get the Chu Clan's help and their genius to join your clan. Got it!"

(You've got nothing!!)

Bai Tianheng screamed internally.

But showing that anger now would only worsen things.

"Yuelan, you're overthinking it. Yes, I should have consulted you—but you were in seclusion and the situation was urgent. And Zihan's of age, and marriage is the natural next step. Moreover, Chu Ziyang is a good match for our son."

He thought this would calm her down.

He was wrong.

Her expression darkened further.

"BAI TIANHENG, do you seriously think I'm angry because you didn't inform me?"

"...Isn't that it?"

Bai Tianheng asked, now honestly confused.

She shook her head slowly.

"Then why?"

He asked confusedly.

"It's because I already promised our son's hand to someone else."

Bai Tianheng blinked.

"Who did you promise?"

"Qin Wulei!"

Yuelan answered.

Bai Tianheng was even more surprised when he heard the name.

"You mean... you were going to have Zihan marry..."

"Yes, to Xinyue!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 203: A Truth Buried in Silence [ 1,102 words ]

### *Chapter 203: A Truth Buried in Silence*

"What???"

Bai Tianheng's head was spinning like crazy.

(You mean to tell me that my wife had always seen Bai Xinyue as Zihan's future wife?)

But he couldn't believe it.

If that were the case, he didn't think she would've done what she did.

Of course, he knew Mu Yuelan and Qin Wulie were old friends and might've made such a promise.

But if she truly intended to keep that promise... why would she do that?

Although Bai Xinyue survived, it very well could have killed her—if not left her crippled forever.

No one would do such a thing to their future daughter-in-law.

Bai Tianheng was baffled beyond belief.

"You were going to have Zihan marry Bai Xinyue?"

Mu Yuelan folded her arms.

"Yes!"

His eyes narrowed.

"Then why did you take her Dao Bone?"

He demanded, his voice low but trembling with fury.

"Do you know what that could've done to her? That could've crippled her cultivation—ruined her life. It could've killed her, Yuelan!"

Mu Yuelan's eyes blazed with cold light.

"That would never have happened."

Her tone was firm. Too firm.

Bai Tianheng's temper flared.

"And why the hell are you so sure?!"

"She has the Phoenix Physique," Mu Yuelan snapped.

"Even if I took her Dao Bone, she would regenerate. Not just her flesh and blood—but her very Dao foundation."

The room fell into stunned silence.

Bai Tianheng stood frozen in place, mouth slightly open, unable to form a response.

"...Phoenix Physique?"

Mu Yuelan nodded, her expression dark but unwavering.

"Yes!"

"You're absolutely sure?"

"I saw it myself," she said, stepping forward. "Her body healed at a rate no human could match. Her meridians realigned. Her core reformed. It's not just theory—I confirmed it."

Bai Tianheng clenched his fists slowly, knuckles whitening.

"How long have you known this?"

"Since she was born."

"Born?!"

Mu Yuelan's eyes flickered with something deeper—regret, maybe even guilt—but her voice didn't shake.

"Qin Wulie told me. Back when Xinyue was still a child. She entrusted the secret to me, and I confirmed it myself when I treated her injuries. It was faint back then, but unmistakable. I've seen it blossom more than once."

Bai Tianheng's expression turned grave.

Phoenix Physique!

A legendary constitution of unparalleled regenerative ability, rare even across ten thousand years.

Most would kill just to obtain a single drop of such bloodline.

Now he realized why Xinyue had survived.

Why she was even stronger now.

But still...

"You gambled with her life," he said coldly.

"I calculated the risk."

"You played god, Yuelan!"

"No," she retorted, eyes narrowing. "I made a sacrifice. For our son!"

There it was.

Silence fell again.

The air between them crackled with tension.

The floor was still littered with fragments of the broken door, and the shattered silence now hung like a blade between husband and wife.

"You made a sacrifice?"

Bai Tianheng's voice dropped low again, dangerously cold.

"That's not a sacrifice, Yuelan. That's theft. That's cruelty. That's—"

"I calculated the risk!"

"Calculated?!"

He slammed his palm down on the desk, sending a tremor through the room.

"You don't get to calculate someone else's pain! Even if she survived—even if she was reborn as an immortal phoenix—it doesn't give you the right to strip her of her Dao Bone just to increase the Cultivation Talent of our son!"

Mu Yuelan's expression turned rigid.

"You think I did it for that?! To increase his cultivation talent?!"

Her spiritual pressure flared sharply. The walls groaned. Books toppled from shelves.

"You stupid bastard! Why the hell would I do that just to make him stronger?!"

She pointed at him, eyes burning with fury.

"Even if Zihan had no cultivation—even if he was born crippled—do you really think I'd let him suffer? With you and me as his parents, with the Bai Clan behind him, he would've never lacked for anything in this world!"

Bai Tianheng faltered.

His mouth opened... but no words came.

He wanted to believe that.

And the way she said it—there was no hesitation, no deceit. Her anger was the anger of a mother, not a schemer.

"...Then why?"

He asked, quieter now.

"Why take Xinyue's Dao Bone? Why put it into Zihan?"

Mu Yuelan's lips trembled.

Her fists slowly unclenched. Her aura softened.

For a moment, she didn't speak.

Then...

She let out a long sigh.

"...Because it was the only way to save his life."

Bai Tianheng's heart stopped.

His eyes widened.

"What...?"

Mu Yuelan looked up at him—tired now, not angry.

"I didn't do it to make him stronger. I did it because if I hadn't... Zihan would've died."

Her voice trembled—just once—before regaining steadiness.

"He had cultivated too hard... too recklessly. He was still young, his foundation unstable—and one day, he went into Qi Deviation."

Mu Yuelan's voice lowered as she recalled the memory.

"His meridians shattered. His Cultivation core collapsed. He was in agony—barely breathing, his soul on the verge of disintegration."

"I summoned everyone. The best alchemists. The top physicians from the Imperial Capital. I gave him every pill, every elixir... but nothing worked."

Her eyes dimmed.

"It was too late. His condition had already entered a terminal stage. No pill or treatment could restore him. He was... slipping away."

Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"And then... one of the Imperial Doctors said something. Something desperate. Something they wouldn't normally dare to suggest."

She looked at Bai Tianheng directly.

"'If only he had a Dao Bone,' the doctor said. 'That might stabilize the collapse—buy time to heal, maybe even reconstruct what was lost.'"

She inhaled deeply.

"And so that's what I did."

Bai Tianheng staggered back a step.

He'd never heard this before.

No one had ever said Zihan was dying.

"And so you chose Xinyue..."

"She was the only one. A child born with the Phoenix Physique and a naturally formed Dao Bone. It was fate!"

"But it wasn't yours to take—"

"I know!"

She screamed, and her voice finally cracked.

"I know what I did! I think about it every day!"

Her legs trembled slightly, but she didn't fall.

"I did something unforgivable. But I would do it again. A thousand times. If it meant saving my son's life. Moreover, she was going to be his wife anyway... so it was her responsibility too."

Bai Tianheng stared at her.

Not with anger now.

But with something deeper.

Conflicted... torn... hollow.

A silence hung between them again—this time heavy not with rage, but grief.

For choices that could never be undone.

And a truth too painful to ever speak aloud.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 204: A Mother's Sin, A Father's Mistake[ 1,329 words ]

### *Chapter 204: A Mother's Sin, A Father's Mistake*

Bai Tianheng knew that he couldn't completely fault her after knowing the truth.

As for where he was during that period, he knew very well.

It was during the conflict with the Li Clan, who had challenged them and wanted to assert their dominance over the Desolate Heaven Empire.

He had been preoccupied with dealing with them when the news of Mu Yuelan taking the Dao Bone from Bai Xinyue reached his ears, and he acted immediately to deal with it.

By then, Dao Bone has already been taken away from Bai Xinyue and he didn't need any other evidence to know that what he heard was true.

His wife has taken Dao Bone from Bai Xinyue to increase the Cultivation talent of Bai Zihan.

Thinking that Bai Xinyue's life would be in danger—and not knowing what his wife might do—he had Bai Xinyue exiled from the clan.

Of course, he had sent many protectors and continued to help her in secret.

On the other hand, Mu Yuelan had also sent men to bring Bai Xinyue back, but they were blocked by the people Bai Tianheng had sent.

Bai Tianheng believed Mu Yuelan was still trying to get Bai Xinyue, which only reinforced his belief that he had made the right decision.

If Bai Xinyue had stayed in the Bai Clan while Mu Yuelan was there, he believed she would have been in danger.

Perhaps if he had been more trusting and not made such a stupid decision, those misunderstandings wouldn't exist.

Perhaps the conflict with Bai Xinyue might not exist either.

After all, Bai Xinyue seemed to be more hurt about being abandoned than having her Dao Bone taken, to be honest.

Bai Tianheng stood in silence, unmoving.

Mu Yuelan's voice still echoed in his ears—harsh, cracking, yet laced with an unbearable vulnerability.

The proud woman he had once known as flawless and firm had just unraveled before him—not as an alchemist, not as a matriarch, but as a mother.

His fists slowly unclenched, then tightened again.

His heart, a fortress forged through countless battles, now cracked with guilt.

(Was I too hasty...?)

Back then, when he had heard what Yuelan had done, he hadn't stopped to ask why.

He hadn't demanded an explanation.

He had assumed the worst.

Assumed that she, like many others, had grown cold and ambitious in the pursuit of power... that she had sacrificed Xinyue just to raise their son's talent to the heavens.

So he acted.

Soon, he has also banished her from the clan with a single decree, despite her trying to explain the situation.

He thought that he didn't have time to listened to excuses since Li Clan didn't stop their attempt at dethroning Bai Clan as the strongest Clan.

But now...

Now he realized.

He had been too preoccupied—too absorbed in the fight against the Li Clan. That conflict had consumed everything he had.

Even his trust.

Even his family.

His jaw tightened as memories surged like a tidal wave.

Yuelan's absence.

Zihan's weakened state back then.

The emptiness that filled the Bai Clan halls after Xinyue was exiled.

Everything... had started there.

And perhaps—just perhaps—he had played a larger part in that tragedy than he dared admit.

"I..."

Bai Tianheng's voice was hoarse.

Mu Yuelan, who had turned her face away, slowly looked back at him.

"I didn't know," he said quietly. "I didn't even try to know."

She said nothing, but her fingers curled at her sides.

"I was so focused on protecting the clan... even that might be an excuse... I didn't see the truth. I didn't see you."

His shoulders slumped. The proud, indomitable patriarch seemed... aged in that moment.

"I thought you'd changed," he muttered. "That you were willing to sacrifice an innocent child for cultivation potential. That you'd lost your heart."

He met her gaze, and there was no fire in it now. Only regret.

"I'm sorry, Yuelan!"

Mu Yuelan's lip trembled.

"No need to apologize! It doesn't undo anything you or I did."

Mu Yuelan knew she hadn't handled things well either.

And while she could excuse it as a matter of urgency and desperation, even that couldn't truly justify her actions.

Still, that didn't mean she wasn't angry at Bai Tianheng—for never giving her a chance to explain.

Though in truth... she hadn't tried to explain, either.

After that day, she had withdrawn completely, maintaining the distance between them in silence.

Moreover, he had expelled Bai Xinyue—someone Mu Yuelan believed deserved her apology and her explanation more than anyone.

She had even sent men to bring the girl back... only for them to be blocked by Bai Tianheng's own people.

That had only deepened the rift between them.

"So what now?"

Bai Tianheng asked awkwardly.

"Zihan is already engaged to Chu Ziyan. And Xinyue... she's been taken away by the Flowing Moon Sect. We don't even know if we'll get to see her again."

"..."

Mu Yuelan stayed silent.

She'd heard bits and pieces of what had happened while she was in seclusion—and had nearly exploded in fury.

Bai Xinyue, the girl she had been trying to find all these years, had reappeared while she was still cultivating... only to vanish again, taken far beyond her reach when she was out.

It felt like the heavens were mocking her and playing with her.

What had calmed her was hearing of her son's recent achievements—how Bai Zihan, once the sickly disappointment of the clan, had now become the most talked-about genius in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire.

Of course, she assumed the rumors were exaggerated as always. But still... she had been happy.

And more than that, she'd heard that Bai Xinyue had risked herself to protect Bai Zihan when he was gravely injured and surrounded by enemies.

Maybe—just maybe—the promise she'd once made to her old friend could still be fulfilled, at least that was what she thought before coming to know that she has been taken away by Yue Wushuang.

The only thing that wasn't mentioned was that Bai Zihan was already engaged which is already old news and something that most have already heard about.

Anyways, Bai Tianheng made a fair point.

There was no point getting worked up over it. The engagement was already done, and Xinyue... was far away.

Sigh!

"You're right," Mu Yuelan murmured. "I was just upset. I had already chosen a bride for our son, and it didn't go as I planned."

Phew!

Bai Tianheng breathed a quiet sigh of relief.

Just then—

"Mother! Father!"

Bai Zihan burst through the shattered doors, slightly out of breath. His eyes darted between the two.

To his surprise, his father was still alive—and his mother seemed calmer than before.

"So... you two finally worked things out?"

He asked, head tilted.

(We'll talk later.)

Mu Yuelan sent the message to Bai Tianheng via Mental Transmission.

He gave a faint nod.

"Haha... of course. It was just a small misunderstanding anyways."

She said aloud with a faint smile.

(Small, my ass!)

Something that had lasted seven years, tearing the family apart... and that's just a small misunderstanding?

Still, whatever. If it meant they'd finally patched things up, he wouldn't complain.

"So, you're engaged to the Chu Clan's daughter?"

Mu Yuelan asked.

Bai Zihan nodded.

"I wonder how she is. Is she even suitable for my precious son? She doesn't have an overbearing personality, right? That wouldn't be good as wife."

(Yeah, right...)

Both Bai Zihan and Bai Tianheng nearly rolled their eyes at her comment.

"Ahem! How about this then," Bai Tianheng interjected.

"Ziyan is at the Bai Clan Estate. You can take this time to meet her and get to know her. Zihan's birthday is only a few days away, after all. Why not use that time to know your daughter-in-law a bit?"

Mu Yuelan nodded in agreement, her eyes lighting up with curiosity.

"Then let's go meet my daughter-in-law!"

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

Chapter 205: Meeting Your Mother-in-Law!

Chapter 205: Meeting Your Mother-in-Law!

As they walked through the winding corridors of the Bai Clan Estate, Mu Yuelan occasionally glanced sideways at her son.

She hadn't had the chance to truly observe him until now—how tall he had grown, how calm and confident his aura had become.

She hadn't expected him to change this much in a single year.

Then she began to ask how he was and what it was in the Heaven Sword Sect.

Well, there were only complaints from him.

A short silence passed between them before Mu Yuelan spoke again, more softly this time.

"Zihan'er..."

He turned to her slightly.

"You're sure you're alright? I mean, really alright?"

Her concern stemmed from the fact that Bai Zihan had taken out the Dao Bone and returned it to Bai Xinyue.

Although she hadn't noticed anything wrong when she scanned him during their first hug, she was still worried.

She stopped in her tracks, forcing him to halt too. Her hand came to his arm, eyes filled with motherly concern.

"You're not just putting on a brave face for us, are you? Your meridians... your body... There's no pain? No hidden backlash?"

For a moment, Bai Zihan didn't respond.

He understood why his mother was asking.

"Nothing's wrong! If there was, I would've said something and gotten it fixed right away!"

Bai Zihan replied confidently.

Mu Yuelan let out a slow breath.

"That's good. That's... really good."

She looked away, hiding the slight glint in her eyes.

They walked for a few more seconds before they arrived before a beautifully carved wooden door adorned with frost-like patterns—delicate and elegant.

Bai Zihan raised his hand and knocked twice.

"Who?"

Bai Xueqing's cold voice rang out.

"Me!"

Bai Zihan arrogantly replied.

"..."

There was a slight pause.

"Come in!"

Mu Yuelan composed herself, smoothing her robes and restoring her usual graceful smile.

As the door creaked open, Bai Zihan stepped inside with a casual air, hands behind his back like he owned the place.

Mu Yuelan followed closely, the grace of a noble matriarch returning with each step.

Bai Xueqing was seated by the window, pouring herself a cup of tea. She looked up, eyebrows already raised.

"What are you—"

Her words froze the moment her eyes landed on the woman behind him.

"...Mother?"

Her teacup clinked against the tray as she stood up abruptly, eyes wide in disbelief.

In a blink, she crossed the room and threw herself into Mu Yuelan's arms, her composure shattering like brittle ice.

"Why are you here? No one told me anything—!"

Her voice cracked with a mix of joy and grievance as she hugged her mother tightly.

Mu Yuelan's smile softened. She stroked Xueqing's back gently.

"Silly girl, must I send a message before coming to see my daughter?"

"But you never leave the Mu Clan Estate..."

Xueqing muttered into her shoulder.

"I didn't think I'd see you like this..."

"It's been too long," Mu Yuelan replied, holding her daughter for a few more moments before gently pulling back.

"Let me have a look at you. You've grown prettier... and thinner. Are you eating well?"

Before Xueqing could respond, a soft rustle sounded from the other side of the room.

Her posture was upright but stiff, her hands clutching the hem of her sleeves.

She bowed deeply the moment Mu Yuelan's gaze shifted to her.

"Hello, Madam Mu! My name is Chu Ziyan of the Chu Clan. I'm your daughter's friend and... Bai Zihan's fiancée."

Her voice was gentle, but the nervousness was unmistakable.

She didn't dare meet Mu Yuelan's eyes for long, and her hands trembled slightly as she straightened up.

She hadn't expected to meet Mu Yuelan like this and became nervous due to the suddenness of the situation.

Mu Yuelan raised a delicate brow, observing the girl before her.

(So this is the girl?)

She was... older than expected, and far more reserved.

But there was an unspoken grace to her demeanor.

Her beauty was also high enough—acceptable for her son's wife.

Mu Yuelan studied her in silence for a breath too long.

Ziyan felt the weight of that silence like a sword poised above her neck.

Finally—

"I see," Mu Yuelan said slowly, a small smile curling her lips.

"So you're the one."

Ziyan straightened even more, stiff as a board.

"Come," Mu Yuelan gestured lightly. "Let me have a proper look at you."

Ziyan hesitated, glancing at Bai Zihan as if asking for help.

He simply smirked and folded his arms.

"Go on! She won't bite."

(Probably!)

Ziyan stepped forward obediently, stopping a few feet in front of Mu Yuelan.

The matriarch's gaze roamed over her—assessing posture, spiritual Qi, eyes, even how she carried herself.

Then, she nodded slowly.

"You have good manners," she said. "And I can tell you've been trained properly in the basics. That's a good start."

Ziyan let out a breath she didn't realize she'd been holding.

Then she turned back to Xueqing and took her daughter's hands again.

"I'll be around for the next few days. Zihan's birthday is almost here, after all."

Mu Yuelan took a seat by the tea table, motioning gracefully for Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyang to join her.

Xueqing sat beside her without hesitation, the warmth in her eyes still lingering from their embrace.

But Ziyang... hesitated again.

She carefully lowered herself onto the cushion across from Mu Yuelan, back straight as a blade, hands clenched politely on her lap.

Mu Yuelan poured tea for all of them, her every movement elegant and fluid.

"You don't need to be so tense, Miss Chu," she said gently, offering Ziyang a cup with a faint smile. "After all, you're my daughter-in-law. Please, be comfortable."

Ziyang bowed her head quickly.

"Thank you, Madam Mu..."

Mu Yuelan took a sip of tea before continuing.

"I've heard a bit about you from my daughter," Mu Yuelan said, her gaze resting thoughtfully on Chu Ziyang.

"But I never imagined you'd end up engaged to Zihan."

She let out a soft chuckle, then continued, "Zihan can be a bit of a handful, yes—but he's a good child, deep down."

Chu Ziyang didn't know whether Mu Yuelan was serious or not when she said those words.

But for mothers, their child will always be good no matter what they do.

She spoke warmly, her tone laced with both affection and exasperation, as if recalling a dozen memories at once.

As she continued praising and teasing her son in equal measure, Bai Zihan's expression gradually shifted to one of visible boredom.

"Alright, alright—I'm leaving," he interrupted, stretching lazily. "No need to sit here and listen to my life story."

Without waiting for a response, he turned and sauntered out of the room.

"Try not to embarrass me too much while I'm gone!"

Mu Yuelan shook her head with an amused smile, then turned back to Ziyang.

"Now, where were we?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 206: A Crybaby No More! [ 1,254 words ]

After a few hours of cultivation in his training room, Bai Zihan stood up with a low grunt, brushing the dust off his sleeves.

His sword was stabbed into the ground beside him, vibrating slightly—its edge still shimmering faintly with rejection.

"...Still no good."

He frowned, eyes narrowing as he glanced at the lingering mark in the air where he'd once again failed to perform the Fate Severing Slash.

He could sense it—just at the edge of his comprehension—but it slipped away every time he reached for it, like mist vanishing under sunlight.

He would've liked to keep practicing, but his Qi was nearly depleted due to the high consumption—even though the attempt had failed.

"Tch!"

He grabbed the sword and sheathed it in one clean motion.

His mood was sour, his thoughts jumbled.

With a casual step, he leapt onto the nearby walkway, heading toward his sister's quarters once more.

As he approached, the soft echo of laughter drifted out from behind the elegant doors.

His steps slowed.

That was his mother laughing.

(What are they talking about?)

Curious now, Bai Zihan pushed open the door with a small creak.

Inside, the scene made him pause.

Mu Yuelan sat comfortably at the tea table, her posture elegant but relaxed, a gentle smile on her face.

Beside her, Chu Ziyang was smiling and chatting with his mother.

They looked too comfortable. Too familiar. As if they'd known each other for years.

He blinked.

"What... happened here?"

Both women turned to look at him.

"Zihan'er, you're back!"

Mu Yuelan greeted warmly, casually waving her fan.

"Come join us! My daughter-in-law and I were just having a lovely chat."

(Daughter-in-law?)

Bai Zihan found it strange—just earlier, his mother had been furious about his engagement to Chu Ziyang, and now she was casually calling her that.

He stepped inside slowly, a little suspicious.

His gaze flicked between the two women.

"You... two seem close."

Chu Ziyang tucked a strand of hair behind her ear, her tone light.

"Your mother just told me some stories from when you were younger."

His face immediately darkened.

"Do you want to hear it too, crybaby?"

Chu Ziyang said, almost laughing.

"What?!"

His expression soured further. He snapped his head toward Mu Yuelan.

"Mother!"

Mu Yuelan simply sipped her tea, utterly composed.

"What?" she asked, raising a delicate brow.

"Isn't it true?"

Chu Ziyang covered her mouth with both hands, her shoulders trembling from silent laughter.

"Don't act like you didn't cry every time you got into a fight back then."

Mu Yuelan continued smoothly.

"Tsk! Tsk! How I miss my old baby."

Bai Zihan clenched his fists, ears tinged red.

It was a time he didn't want to remember—when he was naive and bullied by others.

Many had been jealous of him.

Jealous of his position as the Clan Leader's son, but at the same time, they looked down on him for his so-called measly talent.

So, they ostracized him and said cruel things.

His nickname was 'Crybaby' since he cried for every little thing.

Well, that lasted for only a couple more years—until they were the ones shedding tears instead.

The very people who mocked him no longer dared look him in the eye.

But it was true. There had been a time when he cried after every beating.

A dark history he'd like to erase.

Mu Yuelan gave a soft sigh, though her eyes held a trace of warmth.

"I was happy and sad when he grew up so fast."

Her voice was low, almost wistful.

"Tsk! I had no choice," Bai Zihan muttered.

"If I didn't, people would think I was easy to bully."

Chu Ziyang glanced at him, her gaze softer now.

She'd always known him to be a petty person—someone who wouldn't let even a small grievance slide. But now... she could see why.

She'd assumed he was a troublemaker, just like Bai Xinyue had described him—someone lazy and arrogant.

But the more she got to know him, the more she understood.

Without talent, and with hard work unrewarded, who wouldn't grow bitter? Why work hard with nothing to get?

Before their engagement, that was all she saw of him.

Afterward... everything changed.

In less than a year, he'd flipped his reputation—going from waste to the top genius of the younger generation.

If not for Mu Yuelan explaining how he couldn't properly absorb Qi like others back then, she too would've believed he was hiding his strength all along like many others believe.

But no—he had really been weak.

And now, he was powerful enough to make even top clans and sects wary.

She could barely believe she once felt superior to him.

Now, despite their engagement being a mere arrangement to silence her parents, her family was the one clinging tightly.

The same relatives who once called her foolish and crazy now urged her to hold onto Bai Zihan at all costs—to keep him away from other girls.

A moment of quiet settled between them.

Then Mu Yuelan clapped her hands once with a smile.

"Alright. Enough reminiscing. Zihan, go wash up. Tomorrow is your big day."

"...Right," he muttered, standing.

"The Celebration!"

\*\*\*

Bai Zihan's Birthday!

The Bai Clan's estate was alight with celebration.

Brilliant lanterns floated in the air, casting golden hues over the main courtyard.

Refined zither melodies echoed gently while fragrant incense curled into the sky. Dozens of servants moved with practiced grace, guiding arriving guests to their seats.

This wasn't just a birthday—it was a declaration of Bai Zihan's status, strength, and future.

High-status figures from across the Desolate Heaven Empire had been invited. Clan leaders, sect elders, nobles—even envoys from the imperial court.

At the forefront of the reception stood Bai Tianheng, dressed in formal ceremonial robes.

Beside him stood Mu Yuelan, glowing in elegant silks, her beauty timeless.

Her presence surprised many. Everyone knew her relationship with Bai Tianheng had long been strained.

Some had even tried to use that rift to break the alliance between the Mu and Bai Clans—obviously, they failed.

They didn't think that she would also show up though it was as expected since it was her son's birthday.

Then—

"Make way for the Young Master!"

All heads turned.

Bai Zihan appeared at the top of the steps, clad in pitch-black ceremonial robes embroidered with gold dragons, a sword strapped to his back.

His gaze was calm, posture proud.

Walking slightly behind him, dressed in a flowing violet gown, was Chu Ziyun.

She drew more than a few whispers.

"Is that the fiancée?"

"The Chu Clan's daughter? One of the top beauties of the Desolate Heaven Empire."

"A perfect couple. Only someone like her is worthy of Bai Zihan."

...

Bai Zihan ignored the murmurs. His eyes swept the crowd.

Chu Ziyang's parents had arrived, as expected.

So had Master Qinglan.

And among the gathered crowd, two unexpected faces stood out:

Princess Yu Qingya and Prince Yu Wenzhao.

Bai Zihan didn't think his birthday warranted the presence of royals—but he wasn't naive.

They were here to build a relationship. To curry favor. Maybe even earn his support—and the Bai Clan's.

Given what they'd witnessed in the Ancient Ruins, it wasn't hard to guess their motives.

But he didn't care.

Their titles were the only impressive things about them. At least, that's all he'd seen so far.

Bai Zihan stepped forward.

The next move was his.

And in a world like this...

A birthday was never just a celebration.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 207 - 17th Birthday! [ 1,477 words ]

### *Chapter 207: 17th Birthday!*

The zither's soft chords faded slightly as Bai Zihan descended the steps, each footfall steady, echoing against the polished white jade flooring of the Bai Clan's grand courtyard.

Hundreds of eyes followed him.

To some, he was the rising dragon of the Bai Clan—glorious, promising, and untouchable.

To others, he was a threat.

And to a few, he was both.

"Welcome, Young Master!"

A Bai Clan elder bowed with a wide smile, signaling the start of the official ceremony.

The gathered crowd stood respectfully as Bai Zihan walked forward under the gaze of hundreds.

His stride was confident yet composed—unhurried, but commanding attention with each step.

Unlike when it was his engagement ceremony, no one here was disrespectful or looked down on him.

His reputation was completely different from that time.

Before greeting the guests, Bai Zihan stepped up to the central dais, where his parents stood waiting.

Bai Tianheng, upright and imposing as ever, nodded faintly.

"Zihan'er," he said, voice deep and steady.

"Happy birthday!"

Mu Yuelan smiled gently, her eyes glimmering with pride.

"Happy birthday, my son," she said warmly. "May this year bring you clarity and strength."

Bai Zihan lowered his head respectfully.

"Thank you, Father! Mother!"

After receiving their blessings, he turned, stepping up to face the sea of guests gathered beneath the lantern-lit skies.

The young master of the Bai Clan looked over the sea of esteemed guests, his expression poised and unreadable.

The glowing lantern light reflected faintly off the gold embroidery of his robe, giving him a faintly divine aura.

After a pause, he bowed slightly—hands clasped before him in greeting.

"I thank you all for coming today!"

His voice, clear and calm, carried across the courtyard with surprising weight.

"Your presence honors not just me, but the Bai Clan as a whole."

He smiled lightly, his gaze sweeping over familiar and unfamiliar faces—clan elders, allied sect representatives, nobles from neighboring regions, and talented juniors from across the empire.

"It brings me joy to celebrate this day surrounded by friends, family, and respected guests."

A few polite nods and murmurs of approval passed through the crowd.

"I hope today's celebration brings you joy, laughter, and a chance to relax—even if only for a while."

He raised a hand lightly, motioning toward the prepared banquet and performances beginning to stir in the background.

"Please enjoy yourselves!"

As the applause began—respectful, appreciative, and dignified—Bai Zihan stepped back from the front.

The celebration had officially begun!

Immediately after, his parents approached him.

"Zihan'er," Bai Tianheng said, reaching into his spatial ring.

"This robe is made from Skyweave Silk, resistant to both fire and blades. It has been personally refined to suit you."

He handed over the white robe, lined with golden clouds and embroidered with protective runes.

Bai Tianheng had initially planned to gift an Earth-Grade Artifact to his son but, after Bai Zihan gave a Saint-Grade Sword to him, he thought that would be just a waste.

Moreover, he had also seen him wielding a Heaven-Grade Sword, so he knew that even if he were to find their most precious artifact, perhaps even that might not be good enough for Bai Zihan.

So, rather than giving something that he couldn't use or a subpar artifact, he decided to go with clothes.

Of course, it wasn't a cheap gift by any means.

Made with the most precious and expensive material, perhaps this one robe was equivalent to the revenue from a small city.

One could even argue that this was the most expensive robe in Desolate Heaven Empire!

Bai Zihan accepted it with both hands, bowing respectfully.

"Thank you, Father!"

Then, Mu Yuelan stepped forward. She held a crystal box sealed with radiant inscriptions.

"I had it refined specifically for you," she said softly. "This is a Top Grade Sixth-Tier Bloodline Foundation Pill. It will strengthen your roots and help stabilize your bloodline."

As the box was handed to Bai Zihan, the crowd stirred audibly.

"A Top Grade Sixth-Tier Pill...?"

"Bloodline Foundation Pill? Isn't it made with super rare and precious ingredients? It is said that its value is that of a city. Can't believe Bai Zihan is receiving this as a gift!"

"Well, it's his mother after all. But damn, I'm jealous. He is already so talented, why does he need such a pill?"

...

The atmosphere shifted as envy and admiration rippled through the watching cultivators.

Bai Zihan bowed again.

"Thank you, Mother!"

But Mu Yuelan wasn't done.

A soft smile curved her lips as she looked at him with a quiet gentleness that rarely appeared on her usually composed face.

"No," she said, her voice low but clear enough for those nearby to hear. "That was for last year."

She raised her hand again, and from within her sleeve emerged a slim, lacquered case made of crimson sandalwood.

Intricate silver inlays adorned its surface, forming the shape of a soaring phoenix and coiling dragon—symbols of nobility and destiny.

"This," she continued, "is your gift for this year."

She opened the case slowly, revealing a refined dark jade hairpin, shaped with clean elegance and unmistakable craftsmanship.

Thin bands of gold traced around its length in the shape of flowing clouds, and a small, blood-red gem was embedded near the top—like a drop of molten fire, brilliant and steady.

"A man walks the path of cultivation," Mu Yuelan said, lifting the hairpin with her own hands, "but it is presence and dignity that make the world acknowledge him—before he even draws his sword."

She stepped closer, her slender fingers brushing aside a loose strand of her son's hair, before gently placing the hairpin in his palm.

"It is not a treasure meant for battle," she said softly, "but it carries the will of your mother and your clan. Wear it not in war, but when you must stand before the world as yourself."

Her voice softened to barely a whisper, meant only for him.

"To remind you that no matter how far you rise... you are still my son."

Bai Zihan remained silent for a long moment, gazing at the heirloom resting in his palm.

It was elegant, beautiful, and far from the violent grandeur of artifacts and weapons.

He lowered his head again—more deeply this time.

"...Thank you, Mother!"

Mu Yuelan's eyes glimmered briefly before she turned back with composed grace, stepping beside Bai Tianheng once more.

Bai Xueqing stepped forward next, her usual aloof expression softened ever so slightly under the lantern light.

Without much ceremony, she held out a small velvet box toward Bai Zihan.

"Here!"

She said curtly, her voice cool but not unkind.

Bai Zihan blinked, then carefully opened the box to reveal a pair of exquisitely crafted earrings — silver filigree woven into the shape of phoenix feathers, each adorned with a tiny sapphire that caught the light with subtle fire.

"Earrings?"

Bai Zihan asked, raising a brow.

"Is this... some sort of tamper? Perhaps to keep watch on me?"

He smirked, teasing but with a trace of genuine suspicion.

Bai Xueqing's lips twitched.

"Hmph! Would that even work on you now? You'd know instantly if I did."

Bai Zihan laughed softly, shaking his head.

"Right. I'll take your word for it."

She rolled her eyes in annoyance.

Then the next person was Chu Ziyang.

She held it out respectfully.

"This is my gift to you!"

Chu Ziyang said softly.

Bai Zihan opened the pouch to reveal a bracelet of polished jade, strung with several beads that glowed faintly with a high profound rank aura.

"It's a High Profound Rank artifact," she explained. "It can enhance your spiritual senses and help you detect danger more quickly."

He turned the bracelet over in his hand, impressed by its craftsmanship and the rare power it radiated.

"Thank you, Ziyang'er!"

He said, trying to sound affectionate.

Like Chu Ziyang, he knew he also needed to keep the image of her living fiancée even if he didn't want to.

She gave a gentle nod, the faintest blush coloring her cheeks.

With the parents and his family having fulfilled their part, the guests began approaching one by one to offer their own gifts.

First came the Bai Clan's own elders—the gifts weren't as extravagant as what Mu Yuelan and Bai Tianheng gave but, of course, compared to what other juniors received, it was a mile better.

Many juniors that were present couldn't help but get jealous.

If they could even get 10 percent, no, 1 percent of the value that Bai Zihan is receiving as gifts, they would feel like flying in the sky.

Yet, to Bai Zihan, those gifts were almost worthless.

What he had gotten from the Immortal Emperor's Ancient Ruin far surpassed any of the things gifted to him.

But of course, the gifts given by his close ones were still valuable to him.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 208: The Royal Proposal[  
1,627 words ]

## *Chapter 208: The Royal Proposal*

Just as the last elder of Bai Clan stepped back, a tall figure in regal purple robes approached, his posture upright and his eyes carrying a noble sharpness.

The Third Prince of the Desolate Heaven Empire, Yu Wenzhao, exuded a calm and composed aura—one befitting imperial blood.

His lips curled into a polite smile as he stopped before Bai Zihan.

"Happy birthday, Young Master Bai!"

He said, offering a long, narrow case made of dark ironwood, etched with cloud patterns and the royal crest.

"This is but a token of appreciation from me."

Bai Zihan accepted it calmly and opened the case.

Inside rested a finely forged Low Earth-grade sword, its blade sheathed in a deep blue scabbard, subtle runes flickering along the surface like flowing water under moonlight.

Yu Wenzhao gestured toward it lightly.

"The sword is named Clearflow. Forged in the inner halls of the Imperial Arsenal and tempered with glacial steel from the Northern Abyss."

The crowd murmured once again. This item was very rare and very precious.

It could even be an heirloom of some medium clan but to Bai Zihan, it was one of the least exciting gifts.

Having Heaven-Grade Sword, what's the use of Low Earth-Grade Sword?

But of course, the people at the party would be shocked because Earth-Grade Artifacts are still valuable to them.

If not for what they had already seen, this gift could have caused a big commotion.

After all, it wasn't normal for a prince to give such a thing to someone else—it was usually the other way around.

Yu Wenzhao was a bit disappointed, as he had thought his gift would be the best among all.

But he had greatly underestimated the Bai Clan—especially Mu Yuelan.

In any case, it was still among the most valuable gifts, and he thought Bai Zihan would appreciate it.

But of course, there wasn't much change in Bai Zihan's expression—almost as if he were looking at some trash.

"I thank Your Highness!"

Bai Zihan still thanked him politely. But no one could tell whether the gift had made any impression on him at all.

Yu Wenzhao's eyes narrowed slightly at Bai Zihan's composed reaction. He leaned in ever so slightly, lowering his voice.

"The court watches the rise of dragons. There are many who would rather fear than support you."

He smiled faintly—like a blade hidden behind silk.

"But not me. The Empire needs true pillars—those who don't just shine, but hold the heavens up."

A veiled proposition.

A subtle rope extended in the form of flattery and promise.

But before he could say more, Bai Zihan tilted his head slightly, as though confused.

He looked at the sword again, then at the prince.

"The Empire truly spares no effort in craftsmanship," he said casually.

"To receive something forged from the Imperial Arsenal is... an honor!"

Yu Wenzhao's smile stiffened slightly.

He had carefully woven his words to hint at an alliance—flattery, veiled loyalty, subtle positioning.

Yet Bai Zihan responded like he hadn't heard a thing.

Still polite, but utterly noncommittal.

He tried again, voice a shade deeper.

"Bai Zihan," he said, "what I mean is, the time will come when men of vision must stand together. Gifts are but gestures. What matters is understanding one another."

Bai Zihan blinked once, brows drawing together in apparent puzzlement.

"Ah," he said slowly.

"So... Your Highness means that... We share the same appreciation for craftsmanship?"

There was no malice in his tone—only sincere confusion.

Or rather, perfectly feigned confusion.

Yu Wenzhao's jaw tightened, but he kept his smile in place.

The crowd didn't notice much, but to the prince, it was clear: this brat was mocking him—politely, carefully, but unmistakably.

"...Right," Yu Wenzhao said after a pause. "May it serve you well."

Without waiting for a further response, he turned sharply and walked off, his sleeves billowing with restrained irritation.

He knew that Bai Zihan wasn't an idiot and was deliberately avoiding the topic, which could only mean one thing—he had no interest in forming an alliance.

Yu Wenzhao might have acted out, if not for being in the Bai Clan's territory—with so many eyes watching him.

A few sharp-eyed elders noticed the Third Prince's clenched fist as he passed.

Just as the tension began to settle, a delicate hush fell over the courtyard—a subtle shift in the wind, as though even the air sensed a new presence.

From among the guests, a figure stepped forward.

Clad in flowing lavender silk that shimmered like moonlight on still water, Yu Qingya, the Fourth Princess of the Empire, entered with quiet grace.

Her gaze was calm, her expression unreadable—beautiful, but distant.

She did not even glance at her brother.

Her steps were light, each one measured with imperial poise.

Unlike the Third Prince's performative confidence, hers was effortless—etched into every gesture, every breath.

She stopped before Bai Zihan.

"Happy birthday, Bai Zihan!"

She said, her tone soft but cool—like porcelain kissed by frost.

In her hands, she held a long, rectangular box tied with a golden ribbon.

"This is a rare spirit armor. Qi-sealed, woven with starlight silk. Top Earth-grade. It can endure the strikes of even a Great Ascension cultivator."

Gasps rippled through the crowd.

The gift clearly outshone the Third Prince's sword.

Anyone could tell that the prince and princess were serious about trying to win Bai Zihan to their side.

Otherwise, they wouldn't have dared to spend so much on a single person.

The Third Prince glanced at Yu Qingya with anger and frustration.

Not only had he failed, but now his gift was overshadowed by his sister's—a blow to his pride that made him appear inferior.

Bai Zihan accepted the box with both hands and gave a slight bow.

"Many thanks, Your Highness!"

His voice was polite and composed—neither cold nor welcoming. Just perfectly balanced.

Yu Qingya's gaze lingered on him, eyes as calm as deep water. Her fan opened with a faint flick, and she leaned in—not too close, but close enough to signal intent.

"But even armor blessed by starlight," she murmured, "cannot shield one from all dangers."

A pause.

Her eyes gleamed with something subtle. Then, in a voice only a few nearby could catch, she added.

"But what if you are married to a Princess?"

Gasps spread like ripples across still water.

Many of the gathered nobles, elders, and envoys froze in place.

An imperial proposal!

Yu Qingya had just offered herself.

And with that, she had offered the Bai Clan an unshakable alliance with the Imperial Family.

A future secured by marriage and imperial blood.

Even some of the older Bai Clan elders, who had remained passive through the previous exchanges, shifted in their seats.

Some straightened. Some furrowed their brows. Some... smiled.

They understood what was being placed on the table.

Power!

Security!

Of course, that would also mean getting involved in succession war which they don't want.

And there was also a fact that Bai Zihan was already engaged.

Yu Qingya's gaze never wavered. Her voice, though cool, was firm with intention.

"Bai Zihan," she said softly, "join me, and the Bai Clan will never stand alone again."

She glanced once—just once—toward Chu Ziyang.

Her meaning was clear.

This was a challenge.

Chu Ziyang's face paled. Her fingers curled slightly into the silk of her sleeve.

She had always known others desired Bai Zihan. After all, his reputation was completely different than when she was engaged to him.

Her title as his fiancée kept many away, but it was clearly not enough to deter someone like a princess.

But to be so thoroughly dismissed—to be ignored as though she didn't even exist?

The humiliation bit deep.

She was obviously angered but she forced a calm expression. She looked toward Bai Zihan, uncertain, expectant... afraid.

But Bai Zihan?

He smiled.

A warm, gentle smile.

Then turned slightly—just enough for the crowd to see—and reached out.

With a swift, casual motion, he took Chu Ziyang's hand in his.

"Your Highness," he said lightly, "this one is flattered beyond words. Truly!"

He turned to face Yu Qingya fully now, still holding Chu Ziyán's hand as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"But I'm afraid the position beside me has already been claimed... by my beautiful fiancée."

A pause.

Then a deeper silence than before.

Chu Ziyán blinked in shock, her lips parting.

Her eyes widened.

She hadn't expected him to say that.

Certainly not with that tone—warm, teasing, real.

Her heart pounded wildly in her chest, and her face flushed deep red.

(I almost fell for it—)

She thought. It is clear that Bai Zihan was using her to reject the princess, though she can't deny that she felt a bit happy when he did.

Yu Qingya's eyes narrowed slightly.

She turned her gaze to Chu Ziyán, expression as smooth as ice.

"An engagement," she said softly, "is a matter of the past. It can be broken."

She took a graceful step forward, gaze cutting through the space between them like a sword sheathed in silk.

"I offer more than affection or beauty. Something no other girl can."

She was clearly suggesting the throne.

"You should consider it seriously, Young Master Bai Zihan. And give me a proper answer."

And with that, she turned.

No theatrics. No lingering glances.

She simply walked away—flowing like moonlight through a field of trembling grass, vanishing back into the noble court.

But her presence lingered. Pressing. Heavy.

The elders whispered. The guest took mental notes. The young nobles stared in awe and envy.

And Bai Zihan?

He stood calmly in the courtyard, holding a flustered Chu Ziyang's hand, as though he hadn't just refused the Fourth Princess of the Empire.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 209: End of the Birthday[ 1,873 words ]

### *Chapter 209: End of the Birthday*

The birthday celebration continued well into the evening.

As music drifted from jade zithers and wine flowed in golden cups, the Bai Clan's main courtyard sparkled under lantern light.

Nobles exchanged pleasantries. Clan leaders offered formal gifts.

But none of the offerings that followed could match the earlier storm brought by the gifts of the Third Prince or the Fourth Princess.

The grandeur of their presents—and the weight of their intentions—cast a long shadow over everything else.

Soon, the excitement dulled into background elegance.

And then, as often happens when powerful figures gather, the talk shifted.

A few guests—mostly young cultivators—gathered near a pavilion, cups in hand, their tones hushed yet spirited.

"Did you know? The Dragon and Phoenix Ranking will be held next year. The Empire's already begun preparations."

"Of course! It's the grandest stage for anyone under twenty-five! Sect prodigies, royal descendants, rogue cultivators—everyone fights for glory there."

"It's not just about glory. The top ten from both rankings receive generous rewards from the Emperor. I heard this year, the prizes will be even greater!"

"Not to mention the winner will be the talk of the Empire for years. Their fame would be set in stone."

"But isn't the winner already decided?"

They looked toward Bai Zihan—the youngest to reach the Soul Formation Realm, and the one many believed to be the true winner of the Inheritance Trial, had he chosen to claim it for himself.

He had already defeated top-tier geniuses from the older generation, including Li Xuan and Zhao Yue.

Though there were still other geniuses across the Empire, in recent years, who could truly compare to Bai Zihan?

"Well, who knows? There's still a year left. A lot can change in between."

"Yeah! Personally, I still believe his older sister is stronger. And besides, you never know what kind of dark horse might show up."

"I can't wait for it!"

...

In the distance, Bai Zihan stood calm and composed, fully aware of the murmurs swirling around him.

(Dragon and Phoenix Competition?)

His interest piqued—not because he wished to compete, but because he knew exactly the kind of Heaven's Chosen who would appear on such a stage to show off.

His gaze drifted to Bai Xueqing.

Bai Xueqing's former fiancé—Nie Fengzhuo!

Once looked down upon as trash, this was likely his moment—his chance to rise and prove everyone wrong.

And what better stage than the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, which decided the strongest young cultivator of the Desolate Heaven Empire?

"Chu Ziyan," Bai Zihan asked casually, "I heard the Dragon and Phoenix Competition is next year. Are you planning to compete?"

She took a sip of her tea.

"I might," she said after a pause. "That's if I'm selected."

Bai Zihan raised a brow in mild interest.

She continued, her tone calm but edged with faint cynicism.

"Most of the participants are handpicked. The major sects and clans each nominate a few of their own—either through internal competitions or simply those they wish to send."

"Then isn't it certain that you'll be chosen? I don't think there are many under twenty-five in the Chu Clan stronger than you," Bai Zihan said.

Chu Ziyang's talent was among the top, and Bai Zihan was well aware she was the most gifted cultivator of her generation in the Chu Clan.

So he didn't understand why she would think she might not be selected.

"Well, that might be true," Chu Ziyang replied.

"But you know, I'm still eligible to compete in the next Dragon and Phoenix Competition. Some elders are saying I should sit this one out and wait."

(Indeed!)

Bai Zihan hadn't thought about that.

And it was true—if she competed in the next round, her chances of reaching an even higher ranking would be greater, plus giving opportunity to her older Clan Members.

Still, Bai Zihan didn't agree with that kind of thinking.

If this competition was meant to determine the strongest, then shouldn't they send their best?

Besides, if others lost to Chu Ziyang, then they had no business competing at all.

Well, even if the Chu Clan didn't send her, there was a high chance she'd be selected by Heaven Sword Sect.

"So only the top sects and clans can participate in the competition?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"That's the direct qualification path," she said. "But others are given a shot too."

Taking another sip of the tea, she continued.

"Before the main event, there's a nationwide selection tournament. Any eligible cultivator under twenty-five can join. The top winners from there are allowed into the main Dragon and Phoenix Competition."

She glanced over the crowd of young cultivators, her voice drifting.

"But let's be honest. Even that's a formality. The final winners almost always come from the top sects and clans. Those preliminaries just give everyone else the illusion of a chance."

It was true—and common knowledge.

How far could talent go without cultivation resources? Without high-grade pills, powerful weapons, and advanced techniques?

Those things are only something that a Top Sect or Clan could provide.

Geniuses without backing rotted in obscurity. Talent alone was never enough.

...Well, that might be true for most cultivators.

Bai Zihan's thoughts wandered to Nie Fengzhuo.

But there were always exceptions.

If he truly intended to rise again, then the preliminary tournament was his only path—unless he had joined a sect.

"Hm... This year might be different though," Bai Zihan murmured.

Chu Ziyang gave him a puzzled look.

"You think the winner won't be from one of the top sects or clans?"

"Who knows?"

Bai Zihan replied casually.

"Phf! Who are you kidding? And here I thought you'd proudly declare, 'No one but I deserve to be the winner.'"

Chu Ziyang mimicked his voice with exaggerated flair.

Bai Zihan frowned slightly, clearly irritated.

"I don't sound like that."

"Hehe... Sure, sure~"

Chu Ziyang laughed.

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The celebration gradually wound down as the moon climbed higher in the velvet sky.

Guests bid their farewells. The air, once filled with music and lively chatter, now carried only the soft rustle of lanterns swaying in the night breeze.

Attendants moved about, collecting empty cups and refolding silk cushions.

Servants doused the lanterns one by one, letting darkness slowly reclaim the grandeur of the Bai Clan courtyard.

Bai Zihan, having fulfilled every obligation, slipped away quietly from the main hall.

His steps were unhurried as he made his way down a cobblestone path that curved through the Bai Clan's inner garden.

The moonlight reflected off the koi pond to his left, and the faint scent of night-blooming jasmine lingered in the summer air.

He stopped beneath an old magnolia tree.

The leaves cast dappled shadows over his face as he tilted his head back, gazing at the star-speckled sky.

(Another year!)

He stood still for a long while, the wind brushing lightly against his robes.

It had only been less than a year since he got his Memories from Earth and many things had changed.

"System!"

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**[ Host Info ]**

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 17

Cultivation Realm: Spirit Formation (Early)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone

Martial Arts:

Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

Eternal Flowing Water Sword (Minor Mastery)

\*\*\*\*\*

Going from the Core Formation Stage all the way to the Soul Formation Realm in a single year—

Something many couldn't achieve in their entire lifetime, yet he had done it within months.

Then there was his Intermediate Sword Intent, a Supreme Dao Bone, and mastery over two Heaven-grade techniques.

With his current strength, he could kill his year-ago self a million times over in just a minute.

However, he wasn't arrogant enough to believe it was all due to his own talent.

If not for the System, he doubted he could have achieved even ten percent of what he had today.

He had almost forgotten all the torment and setbacks the System Interface had caused him over the years.

Now, it all felt worth it.

His previous fear of being killed by the Protagonist had also almost disappeared.

For one, he realized that Heaven's Chosen were extremely rare—he had only encountered three in the span of a year.

Which, in hindsight, made sense. After all, it wasn't like Heaven's Chosen grew like cabbages. If they did, he truly would have been too afraid to even step outside.

Another reason was his own strength. With how far he had come, he didn't believe Heaven's Chosen with low Fate Stars could threaten him anymore.

Of course, he wasn't underestimating them either—

Even a one-star Fate Heaven's Chosen had nearly killed him before, using a hidden trump card.

He needed to always remember: one mistake could still lead to his end, just like every other so-called villain.

Just as he was pondering those things, he sensed another presence nearby.

A familiar one.

He didn't turn—only spoke softly.

"Luo Qing!"

From behind the magnolia tree, a figure hesitated, then slowly stepped forward into the moonlight.

Her robes were pale lavender, embroidered with silver cranes, and her dark hair was tied simply, with a single orchid pin.

She looked startled to have been noticed, her eyes widening slightly.

"Y-Young Master Bai Zihan..."

Her voice was soft—barely above a whisper—but in the quiet of the night, it reached him clearly.

Bai Zihan finally turned to look at her, his expression calm but inquisitive.

"What brings you here, Luo Qing?"

"I—uh..."

She fidgeted with the hem of her sleeve, her cheeks already dusted pink under the moonlight.

For a moment, she looked like she might turn and flee.

But then she took a deep breath, looked at him directly—if only for a second—and said:

"...Happy birthday."

Her voice trembled faintly.

Then, as if afraid she might lose her nerve, she stepped forward and held out a small, finely wrapped box tied with a silver ribbon.

"This is... for you."

Bai Zihan blinked.

The gift wasn't particularly ornate—just a simple wooden box, polished and delicately carved—but somehow, its plainness made it more sincere.

He accepted it with a light smile.

"Thank you!"

He said, his tone warmer than usual.

That alone made Luo Qing's face blush.

But before he could say anything more, she bowed slightly and—clearly overwhelmed—turned on her heel and hurried away, nearly tripping over the edge of her robe in her rush.

Her quiet footsteps faded down the path.

Bai Zihan remained under the magnolia tree, looking down at the box in his hand.

He let out a soft chuckle.

"Silly girl!"

He untied the simple knot, opening the box with care.

Inside was a neatly folded cloth belt, handwoven from soft gray-blue threads.

The stitching was slightly uneven in places, but that only added to its quiet charm.

It was humble, without embroidery or ornament—yet carefully made, and clearly meant for him.

He ran his fingers over the fabric.

It was light, but strong. Very Practical.

He held it up to the starlight, and a faint smile touched his lips.

To him, this gift was perhaps far more meaningful than what the two princes and the princess had given him—gifts he had no real use for and might never even touch.

"Let's hope this year is just as interesting as the last one!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 210: Back To Heaven Sword Sect[ 1,219 words ]

### *Chapter 210: Back To Heaven Sword Sect*

Three days after the birthday celebration, Bai Zihan was set to return to the Heaven Sword Sect—alongside Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan.

As the massive flying ship descended onto the Heaven Sword Sect's floating docks, Bai Zihan stepped out calmly.

But the atmosphere was entirely different from the day he first arrived at the Sect.

Back then, whispers of his so-called mediocrity trailed him like shadows. Many had scoffed at his entry—calling him a Bai Clan failure riding on family prestige.

Now?

Now, people looked at him like a celestial being descending from the heavens.

Eyes followed him with awe and admiration.

Cultivators—disciples and elders alike—paused in their movements, many nudging each other in recognition.

"Bai Zihan! He's finally back!"

"I heard he reached the Soul Formation Realm already! It is also rumored that he achieved Sword Intent. Unbelievable!"

"Whoever said he was a waste should be fed to spirit beasts!"

"Damn! I missed my chance to befriend him early."

...

A wave of murmurs and praises spread through the crowd like wildfire.

The female disciples were no exception.

Some openly sighed, hands on their cheeks, eyes sparkling with longing.

"Did you see how he got off the ship? So graceful like a celestial noble!"

"So talented and handsome... he's literally the dream Dao Companion!"

"I wouldn't even mind being his concubine!"

Their giggles and whispers grew louder—until Chu Ziyang, walking beside Bai Zihan, turned her head slightly.

Her gaze, sharp and frosty, swept over the group.

Instant silence!

The more sensible ones quickly lowered their heads or scattered in other directions, pretending they hadn't said anything.

Chu Ziyang didn't say a word. She didn't have to.

Chu Ziyang let out a long breath, rubbing her temple in irritation.

(First, people kept saying I was too good for him... now they're all lining up like love-struck fools.)

(And don't even get me started on that Fourth Princess...)

Because of the Fourth Princess's declaration, Chu Ziyang's family elders had been constantly pestering her—to treat Bai Zihan well and not let him slip away.

Some even suggested it would be best to set a marriage date as soon as possible... and perhaps even have a child.

Just thinking about it made her angry.

It was as if, the moment Bai Zihan's value skyrocketed, hers no longer mattered.

Bai Zihan, of course, paid it all no mind.

Fame? Praise? Adoration?

None of it ever held meaning for him. Whether people insulted him or worshipped him—he simply walked his path.

Chasing after vanity was never something he was interested in.

He turned slightly toward Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan, his expression calm.

"I'll head to my courtyard first."

"Mm." Bai Xueqing nodded.

"Go rest! You've had enough noise for a while."

Chu Ziyan waved him off.

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Bai Zihan stepped into his courtyard.

The gentle breeze stirred the surrounding bamboo leaves, but the courtyard itself remained still—immaculate, quiet, and peaceful.

The moment his foot touched the polished stone path, a familiar voice called out.

"Young Master!"

Startled, Lin Xuan quickly stood up from where he had been sweeping near the inner gate.

Dressed in simple robes, his sleeves rolled up, the young man looked momentarily flustered, then bowed respectfully.

"Welcome back!"

Bai Zihan paused.

"Lin Xuan?"

Despite being a Core Disciple now, Lin Xuan still addressed him the same way—as if nothing had changed.

Not with forced humility, but with genuine warmth and gratitude.

Bai Zihan hadn't expected to see him here. The Heaven Sword Sect had clearly taken Lin Xuan under its wing, focusing on nurturing him properly—he was in seclusion most of the time.

But it seemed that his seclusion had finally come to an end.

Bai Zihan swept his gaze across the courtyard.

Not a single leaf out of place. The water basin sparkled, the stone paths had been scrubbed, the herb pots were aligned by type and size, and grass was cut properly.

It was too meticulous to be done just once. Lin Xuan had been doing this regularly.

"You've been taking care of this place the whole time?"

Lin Xuan scratched his cheek a little shyly.

"Well, it's my responsibility as a young master's servant. I had to keep it properly cleaned for when the young master returns."

Bai Zihan gave a faint nod, his expression unreadable, but a faint warmth flickered in his eyes.

With his status, it would be easy to give this job to a handyman. But it seems like he was still adamant on doing it himself like when he was a handyman.

His gaze then settled on Lin Xuan again—this time, more sharply.

Golden Core Realm!

A steady, solid foundation. No fluctuations, no instability. He had broken through not long ago, but it was already refined.

And this wasn't even his true strength—it was his comprehension.

Give him a technique, and he could understand it in hours. Master it in days. Perfect in weeks.

That was his real cheat ability.

His cultivation speed was actually quite subpar compared to his comprehension ability, and yet he had still managed to reach the Golden Core Stage.

Bai Zihan knew that while he himself had reached the Soul Formation Realm—an even greater feat—it was only possible because of the support from his System.

Indeed, Lin Xuan was a protagonist.

"Golden Core Stage already?"

Bai Zihan said calmly.

Lin Xuan looked a little embarrassed.

"Compared to Young Master's accomplishments, this is nothing."

Lin Xuan said, rubbing the back of his neck with a sheepish smile.

"Congratulations, Young Master!"

He straightened slightly, no longer the bashful handyman of before, but now carrying the poised bearing of a confident cultivator.

"To reach the Soul Formation Realm at your age... to grasp Sword Intent... the entire sect's been talking about you."

He chuckled softly.

"Young Master has already become a model for many," Lin Xuan said earnestly. "Elders have been using Young Master as an example to motivate the junior disciples. They said you're exactly the kind of cultivator everyone should strive to become."

Bai Zihan gave a soft, short laugh. Not quite mocking, but not overly impressed either.

He knew that those same elders might have been the ones who declined and rejected his admission as a disciple before.

Well, he didn't dislike them and even hoped their persuasion had worked—then he might have avoided coming to Heaven Sword Sect.

But thinking about it now, it was probably for the best.

Many things had happened since, good and bad but perhaps meeting Lin Xuan was the greatest outcome.

He liked to believe their relationship was good and that Lin Xuan wouldn't become his enemy.

But that was something only the future could decide—who knew what would happen.

Lin Xuan continued, "Even the Sect Leader mentioned you and complimented you on many occasions."

Bai Zihan nodded thoughtfully, the weight of Lin Xuan's words settling quietly in his chest.

"Seems like I've stirred quite the ripple," he said with a faint smile. "But titles and praise won't make me stronger. Only hard work will."

Lin Xuan smiled in return, admiration clear in his eyes.

Indeed, his Young Master was someone who would never let others dictate his life or choices.

That, Lin Xuan believed, was exactly why he had been chosen by Young Master.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 211: Annulment and Arrogance[ 1,230 words ]

*Chapter 211: Annulment and Arrogance*

"Welcome back, Young Master!"

Fang Jinyan and Kong Zhanhong stepped forward, their expressions respectful yet eager.

They had been summoned by Bai Zihan through the Transmission Jade.

Bai Zihan gave a nod, then got straight to the point.

"Did anything happen here while I was gone?"

Fang Jinyan stepped forward and gave a slight bow before replying,

"Nothing particularly eventful occurred during your absence, Young Master."

He paused for a beat, then his expression turned serious.

"However, tensions within the Sect are reaching a breaking point. The two main factions are on the verge of open conflict."

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed slightly, but he said nothing—waiting for him to continue.

"The Anti-Sect Leader faction, led by Elder Han, has been especially active. He's recruiting not just elders, but also top disciples—offering benefits, resources, even access to forbidden techniques."

Fang Jinyan continued, voice low.

"His ambition is no longer hidden. It's obvious to anyone now—he intends to seize the Sect Leader's position for himself."

Bai Zihan's expression remained composed.

While he didn't particularly care who became Sect Leader, the Bai Clan did have a good relationship with the current one.

And even though he disliked that Sect Leader agreed to father's proposal, the current Sect Leader had helped him get into the Sect through the backdoor.

So, if possible, he wouldn't mind helping the current leader. But if things truly spiraled out of control—then sorry, he couldn't do much.

"You've been watching them closely!"

He said.

Fang Jinyan nodded.

"I've planted eyes inside their fraction. Not deeply yet, but enough to gain key information. The most alarming part is—they're now involving outsiders."

"Outsiders?"

Bai Zihan echoed, tone flat.

"They've been contacting various clans, seeking external support—especially the Shen Clan," Fang Jinyan said, lowering his voice.

"The Shen Clan?"

Bai Zihan widened his eyes at the mention of the name that he almost forgot.

Fang Jinyan nodded again.

"As for how they'll convince them to help... there's not much to guess."

He looked directly at Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan returned the look and gave a knowing nod.

The Shen Clan had always been tied to Elder Han through Elder Shen and Shen Liang.

While the Anti-Sect Leader faction hadn't supported Elder Shen when things turned bad, they clearly hadn't forgotten the Shen Clan's value.

And now, to win their favor, they'd probably made a promise.

A promise to deal with him.

There was a short silence.

"There's no need to worry about them. If they want to come at me, they're welcome to try."

Bai Zihan's voice was calm, even lazy.

"But they should first ask themselves if they're stronger than the Li or Zhao Clans."

Fang Jinyan and Kong Zhanhong exchanged glances, admiration flashing in their eyes.

Indeed, compared to the Li and Zhao Clans, what was the Shen Clan?

Though powerful, they couldn't even compare to one of the two—let alone both combined.

And Bai Zihan had survived a war against both.

If anything, it was the Shen Clan who should be worried—especially if they want to go against Bai Zihan.

"Fang Jinyan, you've done well. Here's your reward!"

Bai Zihan handed over a jade bottle filled with high-quality cultivation pills.

"Thank you, Young Master!"

Fang Jinyan bowed deeply in gratitude.

Once again, he thought to himself—serving Bai Zihan was truly a Heaven-sent opportunity.

What he had earned in the past few years of hard work for others like Shen Liang paled in comparison to what he'd gotten simply by gathering information for Bai Zihan.

Compared to the risks he once took, this was easy... and far more rewarding.

Then, Bai Zihan turned to Kong Zhanhong.

"Did you prepare what I asked for?"

Kong Zhanhong stepped forward and presented a scroll containing all the information he had gathered, with the key points already summarized.

With practiced precision, Kong Zhanhong unfurled the scroll and began his report in a calm, steady voice.

"The person you asked me to investigate—Nie Fengzhuo—has a rather dramatic history. You could say his story reads like something out of a novel."

Bai Zihan raised a brow slightly.

"Go on!"

Kong Zhanhong nodded.

"Nie Fengzhuo was once hailed as the number one prodigy of Cloudcrane City, the heartland of the Nie Clan's territory. By the age of ten, he had already reached the peak of Foundation Establishment and was expected to reach Core Formation before the age of twelve. The elders called him a once-in-a-century talent, and the city praised him as its future."

"But... something happened. Out of nowhere, his cultivation plummeted. Not just decreased—completely vanished. No one knows the exact cause. The Nie Clan tried to keep it under wraps, but word eventually spread."

(Well, standard stuff!)

Bai Zihan thought.

"And the engagement with Bai Xueqing was annulled soon after. But everyone already knew that was coming—Miss Bai Xueqing is considered the number one talent in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire. How could she be expected to marry someone branded as trash? Even the Nie Clan wouldn't dare hold onto such a dream."

Bai Zihan nodded at Kong Zhanhong's reasoning.

"However, what could've been a quiet and amicable annulment turned into a disaster for both parties."

Kong Zhanhong glanced at Bai Zihan to gauge any reaction, but seeing none, he continued.

"Miss Bai Xueqing chose the worst possible time to announce the annulment. It was during the Nie Clan Leader's birthday celebration, with many prestigious guests present. She canceled the engagement right in front of everyone."

Kong Zhanhong continued, still mindful of Bai Zihan's emotions.

He was determined to provide accurate information, but if any part of the truth was likely to anger Bai Zihan—especially saying it was his sister's fault—he would have left it out.

But Bai Zihan didn't seem angry. He simply listened, focused.

So, Kong Zhanhong continued, his voice steady and his report thorough.

"Nie Fengzhuo couldn't take the humiliation—especially the shame his father had to endure because of him and Miss Bai Xueqing's annulment of their engagement. He reportedly argued with Miss Bai Xueqing and then declared that he would surpass her, and make her regret her words."

Bai Zihan nodded slightly. It was more or less how he'd imagined things had gone.

It was the kind of thing protagonists went through—first humiliation, then payback.

Of course, he also agreed that the fault lay with his sister for annulling the engagement like that, when she could have handled it discreetly.

He knew full well that his sister wasn't ignorant of that fact.

But naturally, there were other factors at play.

Like Shen Liang, for example—who clearly couldn't wait for the engagement to be canceled.

Bai Zihan suspected that Shen Liang might have deliberately arranged for that particular date, even persuading the elders who accompanied Bai Xueqing for the annulment.

If so, the humiliation of the Nie Clan would've gone just as Shen Liang intended.

Well, that was his speculation—but it wasn't far-fetched.

Still, that didn't mean he was shifting the blame away from Bai Xueqing.

She had been foolish enough to fall for someone else's scheme. Not that he expected anything different from her.

And even if she had realized later that it was her fault, her pride likely wouldn't have allowed her to apologize or take back her words.

In the end, she blew out of proportion what could have been resolved calmly and discreetly.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 212: Info On Nie Fengzhuo! [ 1,141 words ]

### *Chapter 212: Info On Nie Fengzhuo!*

"The Nie Clan's reputation took a major blow as a result. From a promising future to fallen disgrace, the Nie Clan nearly collapsed under ridicule and lost multiple alliances, thinking that Nie Fengzhuo had made enemies with the Bai Clan with his last declaration."

It was understandable considering Nie Fengzhuo was picking a fight with the strongest clan of the Empire.

Moreover, there must have been many in alliance with the Nie Clan due to their connection with the Bai Clan.

With that connection gone, they thought there was no need to maintain friendship with the Nie Clan.

Nie Fengzhuo also shouldn't have picked a fight just because of the annulment of the engagement, because even if the engagement was gone, the relationship was still there.

But that too was destroyed by his declaration though Bai Xueqing played an equal part.

But that is what the protagonist does!

"So, could it be that the Nie Clan is still struggling?"

Bai Zihan asked.

If so, perhaps he could use that to try to salvage the situation.

Well, not like the enmity would be gone—but at least soften the blow.

Although he was confident that he could take care of Nie Fengzhuo, if he was indeed a protagonist, there was no saying what kind of opportunity he might have gotten.

In many novels, the protagonist might be weak and could easily be killed—but then he would have something like a one-time-use trump card to kill even a supreme being.

He didn't want to become that sacrificial lamb.

Unfortunately, Kong Zhanhong shook his head.

"Today, it's a different story. After the engagement was cancelled, Nie Fengzhuo seemed to have undergone a significant change."

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened.

"He reached the Core Formation Stage just a month from his Qi Gathering Stage. Not only that, he defeated the rival clan's greatest genius, who was in the Core Condensation Realm."

"Oh ho!"

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, a touch of amusement flashing in his eyes.

He genuinely pitied the poor soul who'd been used as a stepping stone by Nie Fengzhuo.

"But that was only the beginning, Young Master."

"Go on!"

"After that duel, the Nie Clan—once on the verge of being replaced in Cloudcrane City—unexpectedly gained a powerful ally."

Kong Zhanhong paused for a moment, then continued, "The ally in question was the Verdant Moon Auction Hall—an organization known throughout the Empire for its strict neutrality. Yet, for reasons still unclear, they openly sided with the Nie Clan."

"They provided resources and commercial leverage, tipping the balance just as the rival clans were making their move to take over the city's power structure."

"Not wanting to see the Nie Clan rise again, the rival clans made hasty moves. Street skirmishes. Clan properties attacked in the night. Ranging from juniors to elders, the conflict kept rising between Nie and other clans."

"In the end, there was an all-out conflict. It didn't escalate to a full war, but it was bad enough to be called one. And the surprising part?"

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow in question.

"The Nie Clan came out on top. Not only did they repel the rival clans, they took over several key businesses and properties."

Kong Zhanhong handed over a marked map, showing clear areas now under the Nie Clan's control.

"From near-collapse to dominance... they've made a full comeback. All within a year. And the city now refers to Nie Fengzhuo as the one who turned the tide."

Bai Zihan slowly leaned back, fingers tapping his chair.

(Nie Fengzhuo must have a powerful ally!)

Bai Zihan instantly recognized this from how Kong Zhanhong lacked information about how certain things came to be.

Verdant Moon Auction Hall must have aligned with the Nie Clan because they knew the Nie Clan would come out victorious.

How did they know?

They must have known—or perhaps Nie Fengzhuo went himself and showed that he had that powerful friend.

In that all-out battle, that powerful ally must have helped the Nie Clan, and that is how they came out victorious.

"What cultivation level is he now?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Kong Zhanhong hesitated briefly, then said, "From what I gathered, he should currently be... at the very least, Late Golden Core, and likely close to Nascent Soul Realm."

"Not Soul Formation?"

Bai Zihan asked calmly.

Kong shook his head.

"Unlikely! At least, not yet. But with his rapid cultivation, there's no telling how fast he's advancing."

Bai Zihan leaned back slightly, thoughtful.

"And where is he now?"

"That's the strange part. After conquering Cloudcrane City, he left again. He traveled for a while—appearing in multiple cities, defeating rising talents one after another. His reputation has also grown—from that of trash to a genius again."

Kong Zhanhong's voice dropped slightly.

"But recently, he's vanished again. No sightings, no reports, nothing. It's as if he's gone into hiding."

Bai Zihan tapped the armrest of his chair.

"Either preparing for something... or waiting for something."

Kong nodded.

"If I were to guess, then he is likely preparing for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition."

"Oh ho!"

Bai Zihan didn't expect that Kong Zhanhong would come to such a conclusion.

"Elaborate!"

"Ahem! Young Master, this is just my guess—but I believe that it is true."

Kong Zhanhong began.

"Although many didn't believe it or thought it was impossible, I think his target is Miss Bai Xueqing as he declared. He wants to challenge her and erase the humiliation that he and his clan received."

Bai Zihan nodded.

"Then there is only one way for him to challenge Miss Bai Xueqing and have this news spread far and wide. That opportunity is in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition!"

"If he manages to defeat Miss Bai Xueqing in Dragon and Phoenix Competition, his past humiliation would be erased, and his and his clan's reputation would rise. So, I believe he must have gone into seclusion to cultivate hard for that day to come."

Kong Zhanhong finished his speculation.

Bai Zihan nodded, and his admiration for Kong Zhanhong grew again.

To be able to reach such a conclusion, Bai Zihan knew that Kong Zhanhong was an intelligent and open-minded person.

Otherwise, if it had been someone else, even if they had thought of such a possibility, they wouldn't have believed it.

Nie Fengzhuo challenging Bai Xueqing? Such things they wouldn't believe at all.

Rather, they might say something like: Nie Clan was prospering, so Nie Fengzhuo must have returned to the Nie Clan or something.

That just shows how Kong Zhanghong didn't let even the smallest possibility slip through his fingers.

And indeed, trying to predict the actions of a protagonist using common sense alone would be foolish.

It requires someone like Kong Zhanghong—someone who considers even the tiniest chances and possibilities.

(Indeed, he is a very useful person!)

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 213: A Network of Eyes[ 1,064 words ]

### *Chapter 213: A Network of Eyes*

"Good work, Kong Zhanhong! You have done a great job!"

"Thank you, Young Master!"

Kong Zhanhong bowed.

"I had promised a Profound-grade artifact to you, but it seems to be lacking for what you did. Instead, take this!"

Saying this, Bai Zihan took out a sword and threw it over to Kong Zhanhong.

Kong Zhanhong received the sword with both hands, his expression respectful yet confused.

He glanced at Bai Zihan, unsure of the deeper meaning behind this sudden gesture.

"Young Master... this is..."

He began, but Bai Zihan gestured for him to open it.

With a slight pause, Kong Zhanhong carefully unsheathed the blade.

A soft shhkh echoed in the air, followed by a radiant gleam of cold light.

The temperature in the room dropped slightly, a faint sword intent emanating from the exposed blade.

Kong Zhanhong's eyes widened in utter disbelief.

"This... this is—!"

He didn't even finish his sentence before running a finger along the inscription on the blade's spine.

"An Earth-Grade Sword!"

His voice shook, barely able to keep calm.

"Young Master, I—I cannot accept such a precious treasure! This sword... it's worth far more than me. How can I—"

Bai Zihan waved a hand, cutting him off with a small smile.

"It is useless to me."

(How can something so powerful be useless?)

Kong Zhanhong thought.

But of course, he knew that while to him, this artifact might be worth more than anything, to someone like Bai Zihan, it might indeed be nothing.

But still, was there even someone else out there who would call an Earth-Grade Artifact useless?

Perhaps only Bai Zihan!

Bai Zihan looked directly at Kong Zhanhong.

"I have high expectations for you, Kong Zhanhong."

Bai Zihan truly had high expectations for Kong Zhanhong.

Kong Zhanhong immediately dropped to one knee, lowering his head in deep gratitude.

"I... I am unworthy of such trust, Young Master. But since you have given it, I swear I will not fail you."

His hands trembled slightly as he sheathed the blade again, holding it close like a priceless heirloom.

"I will work even harder, Young Master! I swear to repay your faith in me with loyalty and results!"

Bai Zihan gave a small nod of approval.

Beside him, Fang Jinyan couldn't help but watch everything in jealousy.

The high-quality pills he was happy about now seemed like a drop in the ocean compared to what Kong Zhanhong had gotten.

An Earth-Grade Artifact?

Even a Profound-Grade Artifact would have made him extremely jealous—but Earth-Grade?

That was a whole other level.

You know, even those high-ranking elders of the sect don't possess one.

Even for top clans and sects, such treasures are highly secured and given only to the most talented or someone who made a great contribution.

But Bai Zihan gave it to Kong Zhanhong. Just like that?

Suppressing his jealousy, he looked at it from another point of view.

Judging by how Bai Zihan considered such a treasure as trash, he knew that Bai Zihan must have many.

And he gives it away easily if one fulfills his mission. So then, next time, he too could get one.

(next time, it will be my turn!)

Fang Jinyan vowed.

"And take this as well!"

Bai Zihan tossed a storage ring toward Kong Zhanhong.

Kong Zhanhong caught it swiftly and sent his spiritual sense into the ring. A moment later, his eyes widened again.

"One hundred thousand gold coins..."

Though not as shocking as an Earth-Grade Sword, it was still an immense fortune—enough to fund a small sect or bribe high officials in the Empire.

He looked up, stunned.

"Young Master..."

"That's for you to continue doing your job."

Bai Zihan said calmly.

He thought about how Kong Zhanhong had managed to gather so much information without any help from him.

With the help of such funds, he believed the information he gathered would be even more valuable.

"Distribute it among those who work under you, and use it to expand your network."

Kong Zhanhong nodded solemnly, already calculating how to allocate the funds.

"I want you to gather more people, more informants. Of course, don't let them know that you are working for me. And focus especially on the targets I'll name. "

Kong Zhanhong listened carefully.

"First, keep a constant eye on Nie Fengzhuo. Learn everything about him—his habits, the people he associates with, and any strange opportunities he may encounter. Pay attention to even the most trivial things."

"Yes, Young Master!"

Kong Zhanhong replied firmly.

"Second, assign people to observe the Verdant Moon Auction Hall. If they do something out of norm, make sure you take note of them."

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed slightly.

And the Nie Clan—monitor them closely. If possible, try to find out if there are any notable girls in their clan, whether due to talent or appearance. Perhaps one who is close with Nie Fengzhuo."

(There is a possibility of a lover of Nie Fengzhuo. As a hero, there would definitely be a heroine. Even if not a lover, someone he cares deeply about.)

If things come down to it, he can make use of them to threaten Nie Fengzhuo.

"Lastly, try to find assassination organizations—particularly those capable of mobilizing multiple Soul Formation experts or even Spirit Severing Realm assassins."

Bai Zihan obviously wants to find the person who was sent to kill him.

The One assassin he kept alive wasn't of any use, and he didn't get any useful information from him.

So, he can only find the culprit one by one.

As a petty person, how could he possibly let go of someone who tried to kill him?

"I understand!"

Kong Zhanhong replied.

Satisfied, Bai Zihan turned to Fang Jinyan.

"You too, Fang Jinyan."

Fang Jinyan immediately straightened.

"Do as you did before. Keep your ears and eyes open for anything related to the Heaven Sword Sect—especially Elder Han's movement."

He paused, then added, "If possible, gather intelligence on other major sects and clans as well. Use the funds from Kong Zhanghong. You can ask for more from the Bai Clan if you need. And if it isn't urgent or important, don't disturb me."

Fang Jinyan blinked, then hesitantly asked, "Young Master... are you going away again?"

Bai Zihan shook his head.

"No. I'll be in seclusion. It's time that I get serious about my Cultivation!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 214: One Year Later! [ 1,231 words ]

*Chapter 214: One Year Later!*

Shhhh...

The soft hum of spiritual Qi faded into silence.

Bai Zihan slowly opened his eyes.

A sharp glint flickered in his pupils—the result of countless hours of tireless cultivation.

His aura was calm, but the space around him seemed subtly distorted, carrying traces of sword intent and profound Dao resonance.

The air was dense with the scent of spiritual herbs and the lingering heat of tempering Qi.

He took a breath—deep and slow.

Then looked inward.

"System!"

A translucent screen appeared before him, displaying his current status:

\*\*\*\*\*

**[ Host Info ]**

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 18

Cultivation Realm: Spirit Severing (Early)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone

Martial Arts:

Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

Eternal Flowing Water Sword (Minor Mastery)

\*\*\*\*\*

He smiled faintly.

(As expected... Worth it!)

His cultivation had taken a massive leap. Although the jump wasn't as drastic as going from Core Formation Stage to Soul Formation Realm within a year, it was still impressive.

One should know that starting from the Soul Formation Realm, making any progress in cultivation is very difficult.

One could take even centuries to break through—if they did at all—to the Spirit Severing Realm.

So, for him to take only a year to do so was a very good result.

Of course, he couldn't have achieved that if he didn't get help from the System.

He used a System Cultivation Card to make sure that he could break through to the Spirit Severing Stage.

With that, now he was only left with 5000 System Points.

(Well, at least it was worth it!)

Moreover, his mastery over the technique had significantly increased as well. It's just that he still couldn't achieve any mastery over the Fate Severing Stage.

It wasn't a lack of talent or comprehension, but he seemed to be missing something else to be able to use the technique.

He could still use it to a certain extent, and it was very powerful, but still not at the level that he saw being used.

Tap... tap...

The sound of footsteps echoed down the hallway outside Bai Zihan's seclusion chamber.

Kong Zhanghong stepped in and immediately bowed deeply.

"Congratulations, Young Master!"

Though his expression was respectful, his eyes trembled slightly as he glanced at Bai Zihan.

(He... he looks so ordinary...)

But that was precisely what made it terrifying.

Despite standing barely a few feet away, Kong Zhanghong couldn't feel a trace of spiritual pressure from Bai Zihan. No energy fluctuations. No aura. Nothing.

Yet Kong Zhanghong knew that Bai Zihan was far from being ordinary, and it was only because Bai Zihan was restraining himself.

(Could he... already be stronger than even the elders from the Heaven Sword Sect?)

He didn't just think, but now genuinely believed it.

Although the elders were powerful—terrifyingly so—he could still sense that they were powerful.

Although one might think that it was because they were that powerful, that wasn't the case. It was because they lacked as much control of Qi as Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan nodded.

The first thing that he did after coming out was to call upon Kong Zhanghong and Fang Jinyan.

"Fang Jinyan didn't come?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"Young Master, he has been infiltrating the Anti-Sect Leader Faction lately. Perhaps he has gone to collect information from them."

Bai Zihan nodded.

Anyways, more than Fang Jinyan, he required Kong Zhanghong.

"Let's get to the point then. What's the status of the thing I asked you to look into?"

Kong Zhanghong straightened and immediately launched into his report.

"Yes, Young Master. Regarding Nie Fengzhuo..."

He took out a scroll and passed it respectfully to Bai Zihan.

"Our men have kept eyes on him. For the past 10 months, he has been in hiding and no one saw him. But finally, he emerged around two months ago, and I had my people keep their eyes open for him."

"Oh?"

Bai Zihan raised a brow. It seems like he has completed his preparation and it was time for him to make a move.

The only time when protagonists are not doing anything is when they are cultivating.

But at other times, they wouldn't be happy if a single day passes without making some noise.

Now that Nie Fengzhuo has emerged, Bai Zihan knew that tracking him down would be easy for Kong Zhanghong—unless he goes into seclusion once again.

"Where is he at now?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"He's currently residing at the Verdant Pavilion Guest Hall in Capital City, preparing for the public selection for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition. My conclusion a year ago turns out to be correct. He wants to compete in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition and avenge his humiliation!"

"Is that so?"

(He definitely must be eager to do so as well!)

Otherwise, he could have waited for the next Dragon and Phoenix Competition, but he made a hasty decision—or perhaps he is that confident about defeating Bai Xueqing?

"When is the public selection for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition?"

"5 days from now!"

"Hmmm... Okay then. Make preparations to go to the Capital. We will go to this Public Dragon and Phoenix Selection."

(Let's see whether this person really is a protagonist or just an unfortunate soul that happens to be dumped by my sister!)

"Young Master... You want to participate in the Public Dragon and Phoenix Selection? Young Master can probably be selected by a Sect or Clan, though most of the selection has already been done. But they would definitely have kept a seat for you."

Kong Zhanghong said.

After all, going through public selection isn't liked by those geniuses from top clans and sects.

They not only think that it's beneath their level but also a waste of time to compete with people with no talent and background.

Bai Zihan shook his head.

"I have no interest in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, nor do I wish to participate."

Bai Zihan thought about whether he would need to participate to perhaps change the fate of his sister being defeated by his ex-fiancé—which is most likely possible if Nie Fengzhuo was Heaven's Chosen.

But he didn't think that he would need to.

Even if his sister was defeated, he didn't think that would necessarily cause anything other than a small loss in reputation for the Bai Clan and people talking about Bai Xueqing making the wrong decision.

Of course, there is a high chance that he would be a threat to him, but that is precisely why he is going to see this guy.

If he is indeed a threat, Bai Zihan didn't want to waste time going through a useless tournament and would directly deal with him.

"Then it's for Nie Fengzhuo?"

Kong Zhanghong asked cautiously.

Bai Zihan nodded.

Kong Zhanghong didn't truly understand why Bai Zihan cared so much about Nie Fengzhuo.

True, he was a talented guy who dared challenge Bai Xueqing, but Kong Zhanghong didn't think that even then he warranted such attention from Bai Zihan.

Moreover, there was no need to observe Nie Fengzhuo. If Bai Zihan wanted to, he could have easily taken care of Nie Fengzhuo any time he wanted.

So, he didn't understand Bai Zihan's intention.

But who was he to question Bai Zihan? He just needed to do what he was told.

"Don't worry, Young Master. I will make sure to prepare everything!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 215: Into the Capital[ 1,191 words ]

### *Chapter 215: Into the Capital*

Whooooosh—!

The skies parted as a massive flying ship cruised above the clouds.

The Bai Clan insignia shone proudly on its sails, drawing eyes from every direction.

Below, the sprawling capital city of the Desolate Heaven Empire stretched out endlessly.

From majestic pagodas to bustling marketplaces, sect outposts to clan-owned manors—it was a melting pot of power, wealth, and ambition.

But today, all eyes were drawn to the sky.

"The Bai Clan's airship?"

"Such grandeur! Could it be an elder?"

"Aren't they early? The public selection of participants isn't even finished yet."

...

Gasps echoed from civilians and cultivators alike.

Even Soul Formation cultivators stepped aside in midair, giving respectful space as the ship passed overhead.

Normally, people wouldn't care much even if a Major Clan or Sect arrived—after all, this was the capital, where the strongest and most powerful cultivators gathered year-round, especially during events like this.

But the Bai Clan was different. Hailed as the strongest clan, their reputation was not to be taken lightly.

Who didn't know of their feat—defending against the other two top clans and even inflicting critical damage in return?

Bai Tianheng didn't miss the opportunity while Bai Zihan was in seclusion.

Taking advantage of the growing distrust toward the Li-Zhao Alliance, he successfully pulled many neutral forces to the Bai Clan's side.

The Bai Clan also expanded aggressively, taking over numerous markets and territories.

And with the upgrade to their cultivation techniques, the clan's overall strength was rising rapidly—so much so that it could be seen with the naked eye.

Most now believed that the Bai Clan was truly the number one clan in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

Even the most arrogant cultivators gave way when they saw the Bai Clan's insignia.

Inside the ship, Bai Zihan stood near the prow, hands clasped behind his back as the capital came into view.

For the past few days, he had been reading intelligence gathered by Kong Zhanghong and Fang Jinyan—conveniently summarized by Kong Zhanghong himself.

Of course, whenever Bai Zihan showed interest in a particular matter, Kong would provide the full details.

First of all, the selection of participants for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition by Major Sect and Clan was mostly completed including the Heaven Sword Sect and the Bai Clan.

As expected, his sister was obviously participating—but as a disciple of the Heaven Sword Sect, not under the Bai Clan's banner. Not that it really mattered.

Secondly, Chu Ziyang had also been selected by the Heaven Sword Sect.

Bai Zihan thought that was for the best, since the Chu Clan hadn't really planned to select her this year, wanting to send their older clan member.

As for the Bai Clan, they too had already completed their selection process.

Naturally, Bai Zihan was called upon and encouraged by the elders, given that he was one of the strongest—if not the strongest—cultivators under twenty-five in not only the Bai Clan but also the Desolate Heaven Empire.

But of course, Bai Zihan declined, stating plainly that he had no interest.

This decision disappointed many in the Bai Clan, including his father, as they had hoped for one of their own to win.

Still, they weren't too disheartened. After all, they had Bai Xueqing—who remained one of the most talented cultivators in the Empire.

Then came information of who might win a spot in the main Dragon and Phoenix Competition through the public selection.

Although most believed it was meaningless—since the real contenders of the main event would be from major clans or sects—the event remained hyped.

After all, it only occurred once every three years.

Many names were thrown around, most of which Bai Zihan hadn't even heard before.

But of course, there was one he recognized.

Nie Fengzhuo!

With all the noise he'd made after emerging from seclusion, it wouldn't feel right if his name wasn't on the list of top contenders for public qualification.

Kong Zhanghong stood quietly beside him, speaking only when needed or addressed.

"Young Master, we'll be arriving shortly. I've already arranged a top-tier suite at the Imperial Moon Pavilion."

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow slightly.

"The Imperial Jade Pavilion?"

"It's the finest guest residence in the capital," Kong said, chest puffed slightly.

"Even sect elders have to book months in advance. During the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, it's nearly impossible to reserve a single room."

He smirked faintly.

"But the moment they heard it was for Young Master, the manager personally came out and offered the top floor."

Bai Zihan merely nodded. To him, such luxury meant little—he had long grown used to it.

As the ship slowly descended, brilliant light formations deactivated in sequence, and a soft spiritual ripple spread out as it docked atop the pavilion's private landing platform.

Below, a group of graceful attendants and managerial staff stood in neat rows, already waiting.

"Welcome, Young Master Bai!"

Their voices rang out in unison as they bowed deeply.

A red carpet of spiritual silk unrolled toward the main entrance as Bai Zihan stepped off the ship.

The manager of the Imperial Jade Pavilion—a Nascent Soul cultivator—hurried forward with cupped fists and a bowed head.

"This one is honored to welcome the Bai Clan's esteemed Young Master. Please forgive our humble preparations—had we known earlier, we would've hosted a banquet worthy of your presence."

Bai Zihan nodded slightly, his expression calm—neither arrogant nor overly kind.

"Take us to the suite," Kong Zhanghong ordered.

Kong carried a hint of arrogance in his tone.

On any other day, people like this manager would've treated him like dirt. But now, with Bai Zihan by his side, the same man behaved like a meek dog.

"Yes, yes! Right this way!"

Soon, they were ushered into the grandest floor of the pavilion—a private level with panoramic spirit-glass windows overlooking the capital, filled with Qi-gathering formations, secluded cultivation alcoves, and jade floors that resonated with spiritual Qi.

Everything was perfect.

Kong Zhanghong walked a step behind Bai Zihan as they entered the suite.

The moment the doors shut, the servant girls quietly and efficiently dispersed—leaving behind nothing but silence and the faint hum of spirit-gathering formations at work.

"Young Master," Kong Zhanghong finally spoke, cupping his fists slightly, "would you like to rest first... or shall we head directly to the Dragon and Phoenix Selection Grounds?"

Bai Zihan casually glanced out the wide spirit-glass window.

The bustling capital stretched beneath them—clouds parting to reveal the majestic Central Martial Arena in the distance, already surrounded by crowds and formation barriers.

"Is Nie Fengzhuo participating today?"

Kong Zhanghong nodded firmly.

"Yes. Just before we landed, I received word that he had drawn a match number for today's selection round. His group is expected to enter the arena by midday."

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed slightly, though his expression remained composed.

"Then we're going."

"Right now?"

Kong Zhanghong asked, already turning to prepare.

"If he's stepping onto the stage, I want to see it with my own eyes."

Bai Zihan turned from the window, his voice low and calm.

"Let's see if he's truly Heaven's Chosen... or just another candle waiting to be snuffed out."

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 216: A Stir in the Arena[ 1,316 words ]

### *Chapter 216: A Stir in the Arena*

The Central Martial Arena was full of people who had come to watch exciting matches.

Of course, no nobles or anyone of high status were present, as these fights were considered boring to them.

This was usually for weaker cultivators who couldn't truly enjoy battles between high-level experts—especially when they couldn't even see them move.

So, the matches between rising geniuses especially at Golden Core Stage was perfect for them.

There were also the families of participants, cheering from the stands.

Nie Fengzhuo stood in the shadowed archway of the waiting area, his arms folded behind his back.

His black-and-silver robe fluttered slightly in the wind, embroidered with the emblem of the Nie Clan—a silver crane soaring amidst storm clouds.

The air was thick with tension, excitement, and the lingering scent of blood from the morning's earlier rounds.

But Nie Fengzhuo was calm.

Eyes closed, breath steady, he let the ambient noise fade into the background.

Around him, other young cultivators fidgeted, adjusted their weapons, or nervously recited incantations under their breath.

Some stole glances at him, but quickly looked away.

Although Nie Fengzhuo's fame was nowhere near that of Bai Zihan or Bai Xueqing, he was still well-known among the participants—regarded as one of the strongest in the Public Selection and most likely to win a spot in the main event.

Nie Fengzhuo didn't care about the attention he received.

After everything he had gone through, he'd learned that how others perceived him wasn't important.

It was better to focus on himself than waste time on others' opinions.

Moreover, he felt he was very close—so close—to getting his revenge and avenging his past humiliation.

(Bai Xueqing, I will definitely make you regret it!)

Nie Fengzhuo thought.

The excited chatter in the arena abruptly quieted as a voice boomed from the center platform.

"The third selection round has concluded!"

The announcer, dressed in flowing robes marked with the imperial emblem, floated several feet above the ground, his voice echoing through sound-amplifying formations.

"Next group: Fourth Group! Participants, step forward!"

Nie Fengzhuo opened his eyes.

Sharp. Cold. Focused.

"Finally, my turn!"

He stepped out of the shadows, his long strides calm and confident.

From the opposite side of the arena, four other participants stepped forward—their expressions wary yet resolved.

Whispers ran through the crowd.

"There! It's Nie Fengzhuo's turn!"

"Who?"

"You know, the guy who was once engaged to Bai Xueqing!"

"That trash?"

"What trash? Since the annulment of the engagement, he's advanced by leaps and bounds—they say he's already in the Nascent Soul Realm. He's clearly one of the strongest participants."

"Still, it doesn't look easy for him to win. The other four seem to have teamed up to deal with Nie Fengzhuo first. Even a Nascent Soul cultivator would struggle against four Golden Core stage opponents at once."

...

Many attention was instantly attracted as soon as they found that it was Nie Fengzhuo's turn.

Nie Fengzhuo arrived at the stage, standing still as the referee called out the rules again.

"Group Four! Five participants. Single elimination. All-out battle—only one may remain!"

The referee raised his hand.

"Begin!"

The other four exchanged glances—and as expected, they planned to eliminate Nie Fengzhuo first.

After all, taking out the strongest together before turning on each other gave them the highest chance of winning.

Otherwise, they knew that in a one-on-one fight, they stood no chance against Nie Fengzhuo, who was one realm higher than them.

Nie Fengzhuo merely scoffed.

"Hmph! This will only make it faster."

Nie Fengzhuo muttered confidently.

Just then, the crowd who was cheering wild suddenly went silent.

"Is that... It can't be!"

"Why would he be here?"

"But that is clearly..."

...

Heads turned. Conversations halted.

There were many shocked faces—even the announcer momentarily forgot about the fight, visibly stunned.

Nie Fengzhuo paid no mind to the change in atmosphere, focused entirely on the enemies before him.

Until he heard it.

"The Bai Clan!"

"It's him—it's Bai Zihan!!"

"What's he doing here?"

...

In an instant, Nie Fengzhuo's entire body tensed.

His eyes snapped toward the direction everyone was looking—and there he was.

Bai Zihan!

Even if he wasn't entirely sure it was him, the symbol of the Bai Clan on his robes told Nie Fengzhuo everything he needed to know.

"What's someone from the Bai Clan doing here?"

Nie Fengzhuo muttered under his breath.

He was also well aware of Bai Zihan—there was no way he couldn't be.

With Bai Zihan's fame spreading everywhere, even if one were to hide in the most remote village, they would hear one or two things about him.

Bai Zihan was also hailed as the strongest and most talented genius of his generation. Nie Fengzhuo had definitely kept an ear out for him.

Moreover, he was the younger brother of Nie Fengzhuo's greatest enemy.

(Should I do it?)

Nie Fengzhuo's fingers twitched as he stared at Bai Zihan, heart pounding with a mix of hatred and impulse.

There was no other reason than the fact that he was from the Bai Clan—the clan he loathed the most.

The same clan that had trampled on his pride and nearly ruined his own family.

His Qi stirred, spiritual energy beginning to pulse as killing intent unconsciously leaked from his body.

But just then—

"Calm down, Fengzhuo."

A voice echoed in his mind—old, calm, yet stern.

Nie Fengzhuo's eyes widened slightly.

It was his master!

A shadowy figure slowly emerged within the depths of his spiritual ring, flickering like a candle in the wind.

Draped in tattered robes, his face obscured, he hovered with arms crossed behind his back, gazing at Nie Fengzhuo with timeless, weary eyes.

"You've trained so long... endured so much... and now you're willing to throw it all away for a single moment of emotion?"

Nie Fengzhuo gritted his teeth.

"But he's from the Bai Clan. He must've been sent here for me! I must—"

"Then what?"

The soul voice interrupted sharply.

"Do you want revenge against Bai Xueqing, or do you want to bring down the entire Bai Clan?"

Nie Fengzhuo fell silent.

"If you attack him here, you'll give them the justification to hunt you down like a dog. You'll be labeled a criminal and dragged into a war you're not ready for."

"You may defeat these weaklings here, but do you really believe you can face the Bai Clan? Do you think you can withstand a clan known to flatten mountains over a single insult?"

Not to mention—he knew Nie Fengzhuo was no match for Bai Zihan.

Even he didn't expect to feel something strange—an inexplicable feeling from such a young man.

He looked at Bai Zihan. Just another youth he normally wouldn't bat an eye at.

But something deep inside told him: this one was dangerous.

It was almost funny.

He, an ancient monster who didn't even feel threatened by most Immortal Realm cultivators, was now feeling this... instinct... from a mere youth.

Nie Fengzhuo clenched his fists, trembling with frustration.

The soul sighed softly.

"You must understand what you truly want. Your goal is Bai Xueqing—not the Bai Clan."

The soul's warning was for his disciple's sake.

The haze in Nie Fengzhuo's eyes slowly cleared.

He took a deep breath.

And exhaled.

The chaos in his spiritual energy receded as his killing intent vanished. His grip on his sword loosened, and his expression returned to one of icy calm.

He was right.

He wasn't strong enough yet.

And his goal wasn't Bai Zihan—it was his older sister.

Nie Fengzhuo nodded to himself and muttered under his breath,

"I know what I want."

He looked away from Bai Zihan, focusing instead on the four participants who now seemed uncertain—hesitant after feeling the wave of bloodlust that had briefly surrounded him.

Nie Fengzhuo raised his head, his voice cold and clear.

"You four... Don't disappoint me."

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 217: Unexpected Heaven Chosen! [ 1,144 words ]

*Chapter 217: Unexpected Heaven Chosen!*

Kong Zhanghong expertly led the way toward the Central Martial Arena.

There were guards stationed at the entrance.

"Who goes there?"

One of them asked.

A few guards instinctively stepped forward, prepared to block the path—until they caught a glimpse of the sigil on Bai Zihan’s robe and the faint yet unmistakable aura surrounding him.

Their eyes widened.

One of the older guards stumbled back a step before quickly dropping into a deep bow.

"Y-Young Master Bai! We didn’t realize... Please forgive our offense!"

The other guards followed in unison, bowing respectfully, their foreheads nearly touching the stone floor.

Bai Zihan said nothing. He simply gave a faint nod, his hands still folded behind his back.

"May I ask what brings you here today?"

"Young Master Bai Zihan wants to watch the competition," Kong Zhanghong answered.

The guard’s eyes widened in shock.

It wasn’t just a member of the Bai Clan—it was the heir himself who had come.

The Captain straightened up nervously and gestured with both hands, his voice respectful.

"Esteemed Young Master Bai, most of the VIP rooms are currently occupied... but if you’ll give us just a moment, I can arrange for one right away."

He was already about to signal a junior guard to discreetly clear out a room—regardless of who was inside.

"That won’t be necessary," Bai Zihan said calmly, cutting in before the order was given.

The guard froze mid-motion.

"No need for a VIP room. Just take me to the regular audience section."

For a moment, the guard blinked in surprise—then relief flashed across his face.

If Bai Zihan had insisted, he would’ve gladly offended even the most powerful guest to make room.

After all, who in the capital—no, the entire Desolate Heaven Empire—could afford to offend the Bai Clan’s Young Master?

But if Bai Zihan didn’t want the VIP room, then that was even better.

"Understood! Right this way, Young Master Bai!"

The guard straightened and gave a crisp salute.

"This humble one will personally escort you and ensure you have the best vantage point available!"

As they made their way through the inner corridor, whispers trailed behind them.

"Is that...?"

"Bai Zihan?! The Young Master of the Bai Clan?!"

"No wonder the guards suddenly started bowing..."

Inside the arena, all the attention shifted toward Bai Zihan the moment he entered—especially due to the reverent behavior of the usually arrogant guard captain.

People naturally grew curious and tried to identify who it was.

And when they saw the Bai Clan sigil on his robe, it wasn't hard to guess he was someone important.

Then, one by one, people began recognizing him.

Bai Zihan!

Even the battle about to begin paused.

But Bai Zihan ignored the noise and quietly took a seat overlooking the arena.

He sat down and stared at the battlefield—doing nothing, as though he were waiting for something.

[Heaven Chosen Detected!]

(As expected!)

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed. He was almost certain it was Nie Fengzhuo. With everything he'd observed so far, he was 99% sure—and now, it had become certain.

Just as he expected to receive the full profile on Nie Fengzhuo—

[Heaven Chosen Detected!]

Again?

Another notification appeared.

(Two notifications?)

Bai Zihan frowned in confusion.

Was the system malfunctioning?

He quickly dismissed the thought—his system wasn't so fragile or was it?

[Scanning...]

[Heaven Chosen Profile Unlocked]

\*\*\*\*\*

Name: Nie Fengzhuo

Age: 19

Fate Grade: ★★★★★ (Four Stars)

Cultivation Base: Soul Formation (MEarly)

Destiny:

Once hailed as a peerless genius destined to reach the heavens, Nie Fengzhuo's brilliance dimmed early after a mysterious incident caused his cultivation to stagnate for years.

Mocked by peers, abandoned by allies, and cast aside by his fiancée at the height of his downfall, he became a shadow of his former self—until he emerged again with terrifying strength and unshakable will.

Nie Fengzhuo's destiny lies in defiance.

Every breakthrough he makes is forged through relentless effort, countless near-death battles, and the burning desire to prove the world wrong.

His cultivation path is not gilded by fortune, but carved through pain, humiliation, and an unyielding refusal to kneel.

What few know is that within his veins flows the blood of a once-mythic ancestor—an ancient sovereign who once shook the heavens with a single command.

Over generations, the bloodline thinned and fell into obscurity, its might nearly forgotten.

But in Nie Fengzhuo, that power has awakened once more.

Though dormant for centuries, it now stirs within him—waiting for the right time to awaken.

Guiding him through this arduous path is Du Changsheng, a legendary sovereign whose soul is bound within a spiritual ring.

This ancient soul lends him wisdom, strength, and timeless experience as he rises toward greatness.

His rise may be slow... but it is inevitable.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Ho oh!"

He wasn't bad at all.

His Fate Grade was even higher than Lin Xuan with 4 stars and he understood that Nie Fengzhuo shouldn't be underestimated.

And his cultivation base... While the public believed him to be in the Nascent Soul Realm, he had already broken through to the Soul Formation Realm.

He was clearly saving that trump card—probably to shock everyone during his fight with Bai Xueqing.

Textbook protagonist behavior!

That should have been the end of it.

But then—

[Scanning...]

[Heaven Chosen Profile Unlocked]

\*\*\*\*\*

Name: Du Changsheng

Age: Unknown

Fate Grade: ★★★★★ (Five Stars)

Cultivation Base: Supreme Immortal

Destiny:

Once a legendary sovereign whose name echoed through the heavens and earth, Du Changsheng's soul embodies wisdom and power that transcend mortal limits.

Now bound within a spiritual ring, he serves as mentor and guide to his disciple, Nie Fengzhuo.

Though his physical body was lost long ago, his soul endured—sealed within the ring, his knowledge and might now fueling his disciple's rise.

But legend speaks of a forbidden art: the Ancient Revival Technique. A method capable of restoring even a soul like his to full life.

Should that technique succeed, Du Changsheng will regain a new physical body—not merged, not fused—reborn into the world.

And with that rebirth, his strength will return in full, allowing him to immediately ascend as one of the strongest cultivators alive.

Until then, he remains in spirit form, silently guiding the one who carries his legacy.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bai Zihan's eyes widened in disbelief.

"...Two Heaven Chosen in one?"

He muttered.

"What kind of freak combination is this?"

Moreover, the soul was actually a higher-graded Heaven Chosen than Nie Fengzhuo.

What kind of setup was this?

How could the master still surpass the disciple?

Wasn't it always the case that the protagonist would eventually outshine their teacher?

But judging by the Fate Grade, it was clear that Du Changsheng—the ancient soul—was destined to be even greater than Nie Fengzhuo.

Still, the most shocking part was that there were two Heaven Chosen bound together!

Things became more complicated than he expected.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 218: To Kill or To Use[ 1,226 words ]

### *Chapter 218: To Kill or To Use*

Bai Zihan's expression remained calm on the surface, but inside, thoughts were surging like a raging tide.

[Du Changsheng...]

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes.

He couldn't sense it, but that was expected—as he was the soul of a Supreme Immortal.

Such a level would already make him the strongest in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

While he was looking at Nie Fengzhuo, the latter too seemed to notice him. Not to mention, Bai Zihan sensed bloodlust—though it lasted only for a few seconds.

Other people might think that it was directed at the other four participants, but he knew that it was definitely directed at him.

(Look at him!)

Bai Zihan smirked. His hatred for his sister was definitely very high, considering that he was showing killing intent just because he was Bai Xueqing's brother.

Well, if Nie Fengzhuo was stupid enough to attack him now, then he would be more than happy to welcome it.

Of course, such a convenient thing didn't happen, and Nie Fengzhuo once again focused on the opponent before him.

Just then—

"Bai Zihan... There is a powerful soul attached to that boy's ring!"

Immortal Emperor Feilian said.

(You're awake?)

"Only because I sensed a very powerful soul nearby. His power might have been very close to mine before death!"

Immortal Emperor Feilian said as she also began to observe Nie Fengzhuo—or perhaps Du Changsheng, who Bai Zihan couldn't see.

(Can he sense you?)

Bai Zihan asked.

The Immortal Emperor's voice was amused.

"Of course not! That soul has been damaged to a state similar to when I met you. However, I had Soul-Confining Artifacts which gradually helped me regain my strength. So, you don't need to worry about my existence being revealed!"

Bai Zihan nodded, though he wasn't worried about revealing her existence.

A new thought bloomed in Bai Zihan's mind as he remembered the System Information of Nie Fengzhuo, and then he looked at Immortal Emperor Feilian.

(What if... I can also bring her back?)

By looking at Du Changsheng's destiny, it seemed like, with the help of Nie Fengzhuo, he would emerge alive again.

If so, couldn't the same method be used to bring back Immortal Emperor Feilian?

If he could accomplish that, wouldn't he have an Immortal Emperor as his ally?

Then he wouldn't need to worry about anything in this world, even the revived Du Changsheng, as his cultivation realm was still lower than Feilian's.

But well, he wasn't sure whether things would go that way.

The first problem was whether Immortal Emperor Feilian would even help him. There was a chance she might not keep her word and become his enemy.

So, even if he could revive her, he first needed to make sure she would definitely be loyal to him and him only.

Then came the second problem: should he let Nie Fengzhuo live?

As one knows, giving time for the protagonist to grow is akin to inviting death to yourself.

Should he even let him live, since he seemed to hate the Bai Clan so much just from his earlier behavior?

Becoming his enemy might be inevitable!

So, should he even let him reach that point where he could revive Nie Fengzhuo?

He needed to weigh his options and find the best choice.

But for now, he was going to do what he came here for—observe Nie Fengzhuo, though he didn't think that was necessary.

With Nie Fengzhuo's actual cultivation being in the Soul Formation Realm and his opponent just Golden Core Realm, it wasn't even enough for a warm-up.

Nie Fengzhuo and the other four participants seemed to have regained their senses and were now ready to face each other after the commotion caused by Bai Zihan.

One of the cultivators suddenly roared, his voice filled with defiance and confidence.

"Don't underestimate me!!"

With a burst of Qi, he surged forward—his saber gleaming as it arced through the air, wind howling in its wake.

He was the boldest among the four—muscular, fierce-eyed, and clearly unwilling to wait and be seen as a coward.

"Everyone shall know my power!"

The saber swung down toward Nie Fengzhuo's head with a blazing trail of spiritual fire.

But Nie Fengzhuo didn't move.

Not even a blink.

CLANG!!

A screech of metal rang out.

To everyone's shock, Nie Fengzhuo raised just two fingers—and caught the saber cleanly between them.

The entire arena gasped.

"What?!"

"He blocked it... with his fingers?!"

The attacker's face twisted in disbelief, veins bulging in his arms as he tried to force the blade downward.

But it didn't budge.

Nie Fengzhuo's gaze was cold—dispassionate. Like he wasn't even seeing the man in front of him.

"Too weak!"

He said.

Then—

CRACK!

With a slight twist of his fingers, the saber shattered like brittle glass.

Before the cultivator could react, Nie Fengzhuo raised his other hand—and struck.

A single palm.

Nothing flashy.

But the force was enough to send the attacker flying like a broken kite, blood spraying from his mouth as he crashed into the barrier surrounding the arena with a loud BOOM.

He crumpled to the floor, unconscious.

Silence!

Even the referee's eyes twitched.

"So fast..."

"He didn't even use a technique!"

"As expected from one of the favorites to win this preliminary selection."

The remaining three cultivators instantly broke into a cold sweat.

They hadn't even started attacking yet—and one of them was already down.

One of the smarter ones gritted his teeth.

"Don't scatter! Attack together!"

With that shout, although the other two didn't want to take orders from another, they knew he was right, and the three attacked together.

They charged Nie Fengzhuo from three sides, Qi gathered as they each prepared their strongest techniques.

"Triple Seal Formation!"

One slammed his palms together—summoning a massive golden rune above Nie Fengzhuo.

Another drew a bow and launched a blazing arrow wrapped in wind and flame.

The third slammed his fists into the ground, creating jagged earthen spikes that shot up like spears.

It was a coordinated, desperate attempt. The crowd held its breath.

Although the teamwork could be described as acceptable at best, it was still admirable since they all were strangers—and competitors at that.

So, such teamwork could still be praised.

An average Nascent Soul Realm cultivator would have struggled against attacks from all sides—and that too, so powerful.

Nie Fengzhuo raised his hand slowly—and then struck the ground with his foot.

BOOM!!

A shockwave erupted from beneath him—pure force, rippling outward like a tidal wave.

The formation above shattered before it could activate.

The spikes crumbled to dust mid-rise.

The arrow froze midair, caught in the trembling void—then exploded.

The three attackers were flung backward, coughing blood, landing in a heap.

None of them got up.

Just like that... it was over.

The crowd sat in stunned silence. Not a single cheer.

The announcer swallowed audibly, floating forward with a stiff expression.

"V-Victor of Group Four: Nie Fengzhuo!"

As the announcement echoed, murmurs returned to the crowd—low, reverent, awed.

"He's... a monster..."

"So this is what he's become after the annulment..."

"And he's still so young..."

Nie Fengzhuo ignored the crowd's reaction. To him, this outcome was expected—and brought no particular satisfaction.

His gaze slowly returned to Bai Zihan.

But it wasn't a look of curiosity.

It was the look of a challenger.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 219: Challenge from Nie Fengzhuo [ 1,527 words ]

*Chapter 219: Challenge from Nie Fengzhuo*

(Fengzhuo, why did you show off so much? You need to be discreet and hide your strength!)

Du Changsheng scolded.

It was not a good idea to show off such strength, just in case he became a target—and it was especially true when Bai Zihan was here observing him.

Although he knew that it wasn't even half the actual power that Nie Fengzhuo could muster, still from other people's perception, Nie Fengzhuo appeared to be just a slightly stronger genius.

So, he could only show a bit of his strength, and others would believe that it was his limit.

Only when facing a powerful person should he disclose some of his actual strength.

But no!

He had to show off just now—and Du Changsheng knew the reason.

It was because Bai Zihan was watching, so he was showing off a bit to send a signal to the Bai Clan.

Nie Fengzhuo had finished his fight, but he still stood in his place, glaring at Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan too stared back with a smirk.

(Fengzhuo, what are you doing? Stop glaring at him and go!)

Du Changsheng advised.

"Master, didn't you say that I can become stronger by overcoming my adversaries? Then isn't this a chance?"

Nie Fengzhuo said.

Du Changsheng had a bad feeling.

(Fengzhuo, stop thinking about doing something stupid! There's no need for you to take the risk. Think about your goal. Don't you want your revenge against Bai Xueqing?)

"..."

Nie Fengzhuo didn't respond, still glaring at Bai Zihan.

Even the other people began to notice the abnormality.

"What is participant Nie Fengzhuo doing?"

Even the announcer was confused.

Just then—

Nie Fengzhuo pointed his finger at Bai Zihan.

"What is Nie Fengzhuo doing? Pointing his finger at Bai Zihan! Does he have a death wish?"

"Although we know what he went through, don't you think he's overestimating himself too much? Young Master Bai can crush him in seconds."

"Tsk! Tsk! Nie Fengzhuo is making a big mistake. He must have become overconfident after defeating some weak people."

"This is going to be interesting!"

...

The tension was rising, and everyone was anticipating an interesting event.

"Young Master Bai, how about a spar?"

Nie Fengzhuo issued the challenge.

Du Changsheng couldn't help but facepalm—even though he didn't have a physical body.

Just when he thought the situation was starting to improve, his stupid disciple had to go and make things worse.

As he'd said before, he was getting a very bad feeling from Bai Zihan—so strong that even he was surprised by it.

In any case, he knew that Nie Fengzhuo challenging Bai Zihan wouldn't yield any good outcome, no matter whether he won or not.

"Stupid disciple, what are you doing? Listen to me and just take a step back!"

Du Changsheng said, slipping into a rare moment of panic.

"Master, I understand what you are saying! I really do!"

Nie Fengzhuo replied firmly.

"But if I back down just because I'm afraid to offend the Bai Clan, then what's the point of my revenge? Do I need to cower just because they're a bigger clan?"

He continued, "That kind of mindset would only make my cultivation path waver. Only by doing things without regret will I truly walk the path I must."

Indeed, no matter how foolish he sounded, Du Changsheng couldn't say anything.

If Nie Fengzhuo took a step back here, there would be countless times in the future when he'd do the same.

One could argue it is a wise decision—but on the path of cultivation, which is filled with hardship and danger, constantly dodging difficulties would only turn one into a coward.

On the other side, Bai Zihan stared calmly at Nie Fengzhuo.

He was pondering this unexpected challenge.

Should he accept?

Bai Zihan knew his chances of winning were quite high.

But of course, he couldn't completely rule out the possibility that Nie Fengzhuo might have some trump cards that could overturn the fight.

Still, he was confident that his arsenal was far superior.

But if he accepts the challenge, he must ensure that Nie Fengzhuo dies.

Otherwise, the classic story of a protagonist growing stronger and returning to seek vengeance might play out—something Bai Zihan absolutely wanted to avoid.

Of course, killing him wouldn't be easy—not with another Heaven's Chosen watching from the sidelines.

And more importantly, Bai Zihan still hadn't decided whether it was better to kill Nie Fengzhuo or keep him alive as a potential Immortal Emperor-level ally in the future.

"This guy... just because he's gained some fame, he thinks he's untouchable! Young Master, allow me to handle him!"

Said Kong Zhanghong, stepping forward furiously.

He was at the Nascent Soul Realm—same as Nie Fengzhuo, he believed.

Armed with the superior techniques of the Heaven Sword Sect and the Earth-Grade Sword gifted by Bai Zihan, he felt fairly confident in his chances.

But Bai Zihan knew better.

Kong Zhanghong would only end up becoming a stepping stone to make Nie Fengzhuo shine.

"No need," Bai Zihan replied.

Whoosh!

With that, he leapt forward and instantly appeared before Nie Fengzhuo.

The sudden movement startled Nie Fengzhuo, who had underestimated Bai Zihan a little—but he still managed to maintain his composure.

"Is Young Master Bai accepting the challenge?"

"Yes! Teach this guy a lesson! Who would've thought Nie Fengzhuo would be so arrogant as to think he can beat Bai Zihan?"

"Can we finally witness the power of the Empire's most talented Cultivator?"

...

The audience buzzed with excitement, thrilled by the prospect of the duel to come.

Bai Zihan stood tall before Nie Fengzhuo, his expression unreadable for a moment—then slowly, a slight smirk curled on his lips.

Amusement flickered in his eyes.

"Interesting," he said, voice calm yet edged with something deeper.

"Are you being brave or is it just arrogance?"

He took a step closer, hands clasped behind his back, posture completely relaxed despite the tension in the air.

"Still, I wonder..." Bai Zihan tilted his head slightly, his gaze sharp and gleaming, "Why would you challenge me, Nie Fengzhuo?"

Nie Fengzhuo's expression didn't change.

"You don't need to pretend anymore, Bai Zihan," he said coldly. "You're not here by coincidence. You're here because of Bai Xueqing, aren't you? Either to observe me on her behalf... or for something worse."

Bai Zihan froze for a beat—and then burst into laughter.

Not the kind of soft chuckle one gives to dismiss a fool—but a full-bodied, hysterical laugh that rang out through the air, startling some of the spectators.

"Hahahaha! Wait... wait—you think I'm here because of my sister?"

He repeated mockingly, as if Nie Fengzhuo had just told the joke of the century.

He shook his head, wiping an imaginary tear from the corner of his eye.

"You really are delusional."

"You think I care about her affairs?"

Bai Zihan's voice suddenly turned cold.

"Whatever Bai Xueqing does with her life is none of my concern."

Nie Fengzhuo's eyes narrowed slightly.

For a moment, confusion flickered in his heart. He had heard the rumors—rumors that Bai Zihan and Bai Xueqing didn't get along.

That their relationship had been strained for years, even before she left the Bai Clan.

And now, seeing his expression, the rumors seemed to have some truth to them.

"Then why are you here? Don't try to lie and say it's just a coincidence," Nie Fengzhuo said coldly.

"Well, you're right—it's not a coincidence,"

Bai Zihan replied, his expression calm and unreadable.

"I came to see you—my sister's ex-fiancé. So what? Can't I watch if I want to?"

Nie Fengzhuo was taken aback again.

Sure, there was no rule saying the Bai Clan's young master couldn't come to watch a competition...

But it still felt off.

Would someone as high as Bai Zihan really come just to watch him—a so-called "insignificant" figure in the eyes of the great clans?

"..."

Nie Fengzhuo couldn't think of anything to say.

In most situations like this, shouldn't the powerful young master just accept the challenge and shut his opponent up?

Why wasn't Bai Zihan following the usual script?

Now he looked like a fool—someone who'd let a little fame get to his head, foolish enough to challenge someone far beyond his reach without any reason.

Bai Zihan's gaze lingered on him for a moment longer.

"You're indeed interesting."

His tone was light, but underneath it was something sharper.

Amusement? Intrigue?

Then came the bombshell:

"How about this, Nie Fengzhuo? Why don't you join the Bai Clan?"

He said it so casually—like it wasn't earth-shattering.

(There's no harm in trying.)

Bai Zihan thought to himself.

(An Immortal Emperor-level ally... that's not something I should let slip away.)

A moment of absolute silence followed.

And then—chaos.

"What?!"

"Did he just say join the Bai Clan?"

"Is he talking about marriage? What is Bai Zihan thinking?!"

"Wait... wasn't Nie Fengzhuo engaged to his sister before?"

Nie Fengzhuo stood stunned. For a moment, he couldn't react.

Bai Zihan chuckled softly.

"Yeah, I know things didn't work out previously. That engagement was cancelled. But there is no rule saying we can't try again!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 220: An Offer Rejected, A Challenge Denied[ 1,536 words ]

*Chapter 220: An Offer Rejected, A Challenge Denied*

Nie Fengzhuo was dumbfounded by what was happening.

He had even shown off a bit of his strength so that Bai Zihan would accept his challenge.

He was fairly certain that Bai Zihan had come either to observe him on behalf of Bai Xueqing—or perhaps to deal with him directly.

In fact, he was sure that if he had challenged Bai Zihan, the latter would have accepted it without hesitation, seeing it as the perfect opportunity to eliminate him or gauge his strength.

But what did he get in return? A marriage invitation?

It was both insulting and absurd—especially considering the pain and humiliation he had endured after the engagement was broken.

"Bai Zihan, are you serious?"

Nie Fengzhuo asked, frowning.

"Of course I am."

Bai Zihan replied calmly.

He knew full well how absurd his suggestion sounded. But what choice did he have?

An Immortal Emperor-level ally was not something he could afford to miss out on.

And although it was bizarre to think that Nie Fengzhuo would ever agree to such a deal—given that Bai Xueqing had broken off the engagement and left the Nie Clan humiliated—it wasn't impossible.

No matter how much hatred Nie Fengzhuo might harbor toward the Bai Clan, as long as the benefits outweighed the past grievances, there was still a chance.

After all, the past is the past—and for the sake of a better future, some things had to be let go.

"Hahaha... Bai Zihan, you really are as shameless as the rumors say."

Nie Fengzhuo laughed coldly, dropping all pretense of civility and directly insulting him.

"There's no way I'll accept such nonsense. And you know why!"

Nie Fengzhuo asked, glaring at Bai Zihan.

"Nie Fengzhuo, I didn't expect you to be such a hypocrite."

Bai Zihan replied, his expression still composed.

"Yes, my sister broke off the engagement, and yes, your clan was humiliated—but don't you think you're avoiding your own responsibility?"

"What do you mean by that?"

Nie Fengzhuo's frown deepened.

Indeed, he had never truly reflected on his part in everything. He had always blamed Bai Xueqing for the downfall of his clan—believing that had she not annulled the engagement, his clan wouldn't have been targeted.

But of course, that wasn't the entire truth.

"First of all, breaking off an engagement arranged by ancestors isn't rare nowadays. What, did you really expect my sister to marry someone she didn't love? Would you be able to accept that? Maybe—but only because it would benefit your clan."

Bai Zihan continued, voice calm yet cutting.

"And don't forget—our Bai Clan never mistreated the Nie Clan. We helped your family many times due to our old relationship."

Nie Fengzhuo fell silent. There wasn't a single lie in what Bai Zihan had said.

Though their clans were no longer as close due to the difference in status, the Bai Clan had helped them multiple times—starting from when the Nie Clan moved to Cloudrance City.

That relationship had boosted the Nie Clan's standing. Other clans had favored and even protected them simply because of their connection to the Bai Clan.

Rival clans had been hesitant to act, fearing the Bai Clan's involvement.

They had honored the ancestral promise, too.

But then Bai Xueqing annulled the engagement, enraging Bai Tianheng so much that he had to publicly scold her.

Then there was Nie Fengzhuo's bold declaration that severed all ties between the two clans.

So in reality, the subsequent attacks on the Nie Clan weren't entirely the Bai Clan's fault. One could argue that Nie Fengzhuo was one of the reasons why it happened.

And just because the annulment led to hardship didn't mean the Nie Clan could forget everything the Bai Clan had done for them.

Of course, to Nie Fengzhuo, none of that mattered—or perhaps he didn't know, or simply chose not to know. His resentment toward Bai Xueqing had blinded him.

"Of course, my sister chose the wrong time and method to break off the engagement. She should've handled it better. Well... she's not the brightest mind."

Bai Zihan added, and the crowd didn't miss the jab he threw at his own sister.

"But let's be honest—did you really think she would marry you at that time?"

That question hit hard.

Nie Fengzhuo hadn't expected it. There had been no love, and deep down, he had known that he wasn't suitable for Bai Xueqing.

Even he were constantly rejecting that when learned about his prior engagement with a girl he has never even seen.

"You may not have been worthy two years ago—but you definitely are now."

Bai Zihan said.

Nie Fengzhuo took a deep breath.

At first, he had thought Bai Zihan was mocking him—but after hearing everything, he realized that Bai Zihan was being serious.

Not that it changed his answer.

"So, how about it? Our Bai Clan has some of the most beautiful women in the Desolate Heaven Empire. You can even choose more than one."

Bai Zihan offered, half-joking, half-serious.

"No need!"

Nie Fengzhuo refused without hesitation.

"Think again. I promise that I would spare no effort in supporting your Nie Clan and even give high-quality pills!"

Bai Zihan said, trying to tell the benefit that he can offer.

"No matter what, my answer wouldn't change!"

Nie Fengzhuo answered.

"Pity! But my offer still stands."

Bai Zihan said.

(It didn't work out.)

Well, not like there was a high chance of success anyway.

Still, there was no need to rush. He had plenty of time to try again.

And if all else failed—then Nie Fengzhuo couldn't blame him. After all, Bai Zihan had given him a chance.

Just as Bai Zihan was about to walk away, Nie Fengzhuo stopped him.

"Wait! I agree I made some rash conclusions. Still, I want to challenge you. Do you accept it?"

Nie Fengzhuo asked.

Bai Zihan looked at him with disinterest.

As someone who only did things when there was something to gain, why would he bother?

"Forget it! I don't have the mood for anything after your rejection of my offer."

Bai Zihan said, implying that he might have changed his mind—if Nie Fengzhuo had accepted the proposal.

Or maybe, like many times in the novel, they could've made a wager with protagonist declaring If you win, I'll do as you ask.

But that was just wishful thinking.

Nie Fengzhuo simply took it as a refusal.

"In that case, I won't force you. We can fight during the Dragon and Phoenix Competition. I'll show you my power then."

Nie Fengzhuo assumed Bai Zihan would be participating—just like everyone else.

After all, Bai Zihan was the favorite to win, so it was natural to believe he'd compete.

But Bai Zihan's next words stunned everyone.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but I won't be participating in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition."

He announced casually.

Nie Fengzhuo blinked twice before fully registering what had just been said.

"What?!"

"Young Master Bai won't be competing in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition?"

"Why not? He has the highest chance of winning! Even if he's the Bai Clan heir, the rewards this time are incredibly generous—not to mention the prestige and fame!"

...

The crowd couldn't understand it.

If they were in Bai Zihan's place, they would've jumped at the opportunity.

Fame, fortune, top-tier rewards!

Who wouldn't want that?

"Are you kidding me?"

"No!"

"Why?"

Nie Fengzhuo asked sincerely.

He truly didn't get it. This was a golden opportunity to show the entire Empire that the Bai Clan was second to none—both now and in the future.

He himself was participating—not just for personal revenge—but also to bring honor and recognition to his clan.

It was even rumored that the winner would receive a 7th-grade pill.

Who wouldn't desire such a prize?

"Why? There's no reason. I just don't find it interesting," Bai Zihan said flatly. "Anyway, I'm done here."

He turned and walked off, Kong Zhanghong silently following behind then followed by the guards.

Nie Fengzhuo stood frozen, dumbfounded.

In his entire life, he had never met anyone as unpredictable as Bai Zihan—someone who acted entirely at his own pace.

The onlookers were left disappointed as Bai Zihan walked away.

They had been hoping—no, expecting—a once-in-a-lifetime clash, only to be met with bitter disappointment.

(Phew! Fengzhuo, you really dodged a bullet there. Good thing Bai Zihan didn't seem interested in you—otherwise...)

Du Changsheng muttered.

He was genuinely relieved. The more he observed Bai Zihan, the more certain he became—this youth was simply too dangerous.

Fortunately, Bai Zihan had dismissed his disciple's reckless challenge without much thought.

Had he accepted, Du Changsheng feared that Bai Zihan might've left an irreparable scar on Nie Fengzhuo's Dao Heart.

Such damage could easily hamper his cultivation and might even give birth to a Heart Demon.

Afterward, Du Changsheng gave Nie Fengzhuo a stern lecture for ignoring his repeated warnings.

Nie Fengzhuo apologized sincerely, and in the end, Du Changsheng chose to let it go.

There was no point in dwelling on something that had already passed.

"Be wary of Bai Zihan!"

He could only sternly warn Nie Fengzhuo, so that he doesn't make the same mistake again. In the future

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 221: The Bell Chimes, Fate Stirs[ 1,145 words ]

### *Chapter 221: The Bell Chimes, Fate Stirs*

The Public Selection for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition continued, and Nie Fengzhuo emerged as one of the ten participants allowed into the Main Event.

Talks about the winners began to spread, but even more than that, it was the unexpected exchange between Bai Zihan and Nie Fengzhuo that became the center of attention.

This led to a significant rise in Nie Fengzhuo's reputation.

Many even speculated that the relationship between the two clans might return to what it once was before the annulment of the engagement.

Then came even bigger news—Bai Zihan, the one who had gained unparalleled fame and was said to be the strongest of his generation, would not be participating in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

"Bai Zihan offered marriage to Nie Fengzhuo?"

"He even tried to bribe him with pills?"

"He's not joining the competition?"

"Tch! Must be scared. His fake reputation would be exposed if he competed."

...

Many who had never seen Bai Zihan in person felt that his reputation was overblown.

Now that he had declined to participate in Dragon and Phoenix Competition, they believed he was doing so to avoid being exposed. They couldn't think of any other reason.

Of course, there were also others who reasoned that perhaps Bai Zihan had no reason to participate, as he already had all the resources he could want from the Bai Clan—not to mention his fame and reputation.

Even if he were to win the competition, his reputation might not increase by much, since it was already so high.

The news eventually reached the Heaven Sword Sect.

Naturally, it reached Bai Xueqing as well.

She was far from amused when she heard that Bai Zihan had tried to rope Nie Fengzhuo into the Bai Clan.

"This... Just what is he thinking?"

Bai Xueqing's brows furrowed in frustration. She usually didn't care what Bai Zihan did, but this involved her.

Just when she found out that Bai Zihan was out of seclusion, what's the first thing he does? He goes to her ex-fiancé and tries to recruit him into the Bai Clan.

Nie Fengzhuo—her ex-fiancé—was also someone who had once dared to challenge her despite being utterly unqualified.

She had always thought of him as someone who talked big but couldn't back it up.

Of course, she knew he was no longer the same trash he used to be, and now he was even qualified to enter the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

But that didn't matter. She wasn't going to lose—not to Nie Fengzhuo or anyone else.

"Looks like he's just doing whatever he pleases as usual."

Chu Ziyang added with a light chuckle.

"Offering marriage to Nie Fengzhuo of all people... What the hell is he thinking?"

"Maybe... maybe he has his reasons,"

Chu Ziyang said.

"Reasons?" Bai Xueqing's tone turned sharp.

"Even if he does have reasons, he should've known better than to do something like this—especially considering my history with Nie Fengzhuo."

"Haha... You know Bai Zihan wouldn't care about that."

Chu Ziyan said. It's foolish to expect Bai Zihan to consider others when he does things.

Bai Xueqing shot her a cold glare.

"Don't laugh. You're his fiancée now—start acting like it."

Chu Ziyan's smile froze.

"I..."

Truthfully, she didn't even know what her relationship with Bai Zihan really was.

A friend? An acquaintance? Her best friend's younger brother?

A fake fiancée? Or a real one?

Initially, she had agreed to the engagement because it would benefit her clan—and because it would stop others from pressuring her into marriage.

But now?

Unlike before, when most girls avoided proposing to Bai Zihan due to his dark reputation, the situation had completely changed.

She had heard rumors that even the top clans were now trying to marry off their daughters to him.

Yes, everyone knew she was engaged to Bai Zihan—but in their eyes, someone like him was too valuable to lose just because he was "engaged."

Besides, hadn't she herself once claimed that their relationship was fake, and that even if they got married, she didn't mind him taking concubines?

At the time, she really felt that she wouldn't care if he did find someone else. Rather she thought that meant that she didn't need to look after Bai Zihan and could focus on things that she wanted.

But now, she wasn't sure.

She remembered getting genuinely angry when the Fourth Princess blatantly proposed to Bai Zihan—ignoring her existence entirely.

It had caught her off guard.

Back then, she thought her anger stemmed from being disrespected.

But now...

Before Chu Ziyang could reflect further, a crisp bell echoed through the Heaven Sword Sect's inner mountain—three solemn chimes that resonated across the skies.

Bai Xueqing turned toward the direction of the sound.

"It's time," she said.

Chu Ziyang quickly stood up, brushing a few stray strands of hair behind her ear.

"You can continue your complaints to Bai Zihan later. Looks like we'll be meeting him soon! And also... your ex-fiancé!"

"..."

Indeed, she would be meeting her ex-fiancé after two whole years—a time during which he had changed drastically.

But she believed she had changed too.

\*\*\*

On the other side, a handsome young man also emerged, heading toward the direction of the chiming bell.

He was Lin Xuan!

"Young Master should've called for me the moment he came out of seclusion," he muttered, sounding a little resentful.

He couldn't help but feel a bit left out—he had been the last of the three to hear that Bai Zihan had ended his seclusion.

But then his expression changed. A smile tugged at his lips, and his steps grew lighter.

"I wonder if Young Master will be surprised by how much I've changed?"

He spoke aloud, exuding a confidence the old Lin Xuan never had.

From nearby, a group of female disciples caught sight of him and squealed.

"Lin Xuan! Marry me!"

"Ahhh! He's so handsome! Why didn't I see that before?"

"Let me bear your child!!!"

...

With his exceptional talent and striking looks, he had quickly risen to become one of the most well-known disciples of the Heaven Sword Sect—admired by many and pursued by even more.

Of course, he paid no attention to the admirers. His focus remained solely on cultivation and serving Bai Zihan.

As he walked through the Main Gate of the Heaven Sword Sect, where countless disciples were gathered, the shouts and excited voices only grew louder.

But Lin Xuan didn't react. He simply walked past them, heading steadily toward the Flying Ship.

There, all the participants had already gathered—including Bai Xueqing, Chu Ziyan, and even Han Zhenwu, who looked visibly displeased.

"Looks like everyone's here! Then let's depart!"

Elder Qinglan announced, her voice echoing across the landing platform.

The Heaven Sword Sect's participants stood tall, ready to depart for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition!

## Chapter 222: The Giants of Desolate Heaven Empire Arrives!

### *Chapter 222: The Giants of Desolate Heaven Empire Arrives!*

The skies above Desolate Heaven Capital were awash with divine light, streaks of color trailing behind flying ships that split the clouds with terrifying force.

One after another, the greatest powers of the empire descended—sect and clan alike—gathering for the most anticipated event in a generation.

The Dragon and Phoenix Competition!

The arrival plaza below buzzed with energy. Onlookers—disciples, rogue cultivators, merchants, and nobles—had long gathered, hoping to catch a glimpse of the legends of their time.

Just then, a massive flying ship shaped like a burning sun pierced through the heavens.

"The Azure Sun Holy Sect has arrived!"

The ship was cast in radiant gold, surrounded by halos of solar essence. The air around it warped from the intensity.

A young man stood at its prow—his long red robes flapping wildly.

His presence alone made the weaker cultivators around feel like they were being baked alive.

"That's Jin Yuanzhan! The Azure Sun Prodigy! Rumored to have fused his core with a piece of the Sun Dao Stone!"

"He was already at Peak Nascent Soul Realm before twenty!"

His golden eyes swept over the crowd coldly before he disappeared into the ship's cabin.

...

No sooner had the echoes of heat died than the sky rippled once more.

"The Celestial Jade Hall is next!"

Their vessel was elegant, adorned with glittering jade runes. It gave off a calm, spiritual aura, as if untouched by mortal dust.

Descending from the ship were several women in flowing pale-green robes, led by an otherworldly beauty with a serene smile.

"That's Shui Lian'er, the Celestial Ice Jade Fairy! She hasn't spoken a word in three years..."

"They say she's on the verge of breaking into the Soul Formation Realm!"

"She has already mastered Celestial Jade Hall's Heavenly Jade Butterfly Storm!"

"There is a big chance that she will be winning this competition."

Suddenly, thunder cracked!

A surge of scarlet lightning split the skies, followed by the thunderous roar of a crimson beast.

"The Crimson Thunder Palace!"

Their ship resembled a war chariot carved from lightning. Every time it moved, a boom followed.

Their participants came out of the Flying Ship who was led by not their elder but by a young man.

He wore a black-red, arms crossed, lightning coiling beneath his feet.

"Lei Zhensheng! He defeated an elder of a Mid Sect with a single punch!"

"He's the heir to the Crimson Thunder Palace—and a madman in battle."

"His thunder dao is violent and destructive... and he's never lost a duel."

"He is the strongest of his generation. I wonder who is stronger between him and Bai Zihan?"

"Bai Zihan? He is just a coward. Otherwise, why would he not participate?"

...

"It's the Heaven Sword Sect!"

A ship shaped like a divine longsword glided down next, elegant yet overwhelming. Sword intent flooded the sky as if to challenge the heavens themselves.

At the forefront stood Bai Xueqing, cold as frost and sharp as steel.

To her left stood Chu Ziyan, smiling casually.

And beside them, with a newfound air of confidence, was Lin Xuan, exuding calm, deadly intent.

"That's Bai Xueqing! One of the favorites to win the Competition."

"There is also Han Zhenwu!"

"But where's Bai Zihan?"

"They say he's not coming. Must be scared of someone."

"Hah! He's all name, no bite. The genius who refuses to compete—how convenient."

Then, a pressure far heavier than any before descended.

"Look—it's the Li Clan!"

Their ship appeared like a molten mountain wrapped in black flame. From within walked Li Meiying, her crimson eyes glowing.

Every step she took left behind a smoldering lotus that burned in place.

"Li Jianhong's daughter... It seems like she has become even stronger!"

"She once incinerated a Demon Beast with just her gaze."

"She is said to be in seclusion for three years. Perhaps she was preparing for Dragon and Phoenix Competition these past years."

"Li Clan must be taking this competition very seriously."

"Of course, they are. They can regain their prestige if they win!"

Soon after, another similar sized Flying Ship entered the audience's view.

"The Zhao Clan follows!"

Descending first was Zhao Chen, his black robes inlaid with gold thread. His steps were slow, but his gaze pierced the horizon.

"That's the Zhao Clan's Prodigy... Zhao Wutian's son!"

"He is said to have one of the brightest minds. Sadly, even he was played by Bai Zihan."

"Yeah! Li and Zhao Clan suffered greatly at the Bai Clan. Who told them to be arrogant and think that they could defeat the Bai Clan?"

"Still, it seems like he has made significant progress."

...

Many people from Li and Zhao couldn't help but get angry as they began hearing such words.

It wasn't new!

It has been happening ever since they lost that War, a year ago.

Many things have happened since then their credibility and reputation has reached a new bottom.

Even some of their allied Clans have started to exit the alliance and are apparently looking to join the Bai Clan's alliance.

So, now their hope of overturning was for them to win the Dragon and Phoenix Competition and to show the world that they were still the Top Three Strongest Clan of Desolate Heaven Empire.

Just when the crowd thought it couldn't get more overwhelming—

A divine crane's cry echoed, and clouds parted like curtains.

"The Bai Clan... is here!"

A snow-white ship descended like a heavenly pavilion. It didn't roar like the others—it simply arrived, yet silenced the crowd with its presence.

The participants from the Bai Clan descended. And of course, there was no Bai Zihan.

"Wait... Bai Zihan isn't here?"

"He truly isn't showing up?"

"This is the strongest youth of our time—and he refuses to compete?"

Despite the rumors, despite the questions...

The flying ship docked.

The top three clans of the Desolate Heaven Empire had now arrived: Li, Zhao, and Bai—each with monstrous geniuses representing them.

Li-Zhao Clan couldn't help but glare angrily at the Bai Clan like they couldn't wait to kill them.

Of course, it was similar for the Bai Clan or perhaps even more.

After all, it was the Li-Zhao Clan that invaded their territory.

The plaza had reached its peak.

The air boiled with tension. Envy, ambition, killing intent—every emotion surged.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 223: The Dragon and Phoenix Stir [ 1,717 words ]

### *Chapter 223: The Dragon and Phoenix Stir*

The divine clang of the ceremonial bell echoed nine times across the Desolate Heaven Capital.

It signaled the official opening of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

Imperial Arena - Outer Circle!

The massive Imperial Arena spanned several li in every direction.

Forged from Profound-grade materials and reinforced with powerful arrays, it could withstand even Soul Formation Realm battles.

Participants were ushered into the Inner Preparation Grounds, a wide courtyard just beyond the coliseum gates.

Each major sect and clan had their designated waiting area separated by spiritual barriers.

Public Selection Participant Waiting Area!

There were about 10 participants who had won and had been selected as the participants of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

Many were already satisfied and didn't think they would advance even one more round, as their strongest was in the Mid Nascent Soul Realm—excluding Nie Fengzhuo.

Their goal had already been achieved which was to win and get selected as participants for the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

While on the other hand, it couldn't be more different for Nie Fengzhuo.

He was finally going to see Bai Xueqing, the one who humiliated him when he was at his lowest, and was going to face her.

Despite what Bai Zihan said, his objective hadn't changed.

He was still going to challenge and win against Bai Xueqing.

Heaven Sword Sect Waiting Area!

Lin Xuan calmly tied his long hair behind his head, his fingers methodical, his movements sharp and clean.

Though he stood among some of the most renowned young elites of the Desolate Heaven Empire, his expression remained indifferent.

His eyes swept across the various groups: the glacial calm of the Celestial Jade Hall, the thunderous aura from the Crimson Thunder Palace, the proud eyes of the Li and Zhao disciples.

But he paid them no mind.

He didn't care for anyone here—except for two people.

Bai Xueqing stood a short distance away, arms folded, her aura cold and immovable.

And beside her—

Chu Ziyang, adjusting the silver hairpin in her bun, whispering something to a Heaven Sword disciple.

Lin Xuan walked over, the surrounding disciples instinctively stepping aside.

"Young Mistress," he said calmly, bowing slightly.

"It seems like Young Master will be arriving late, and since we are already in the participant arena, meeting with him at the moment would be difficult."

Chu Ziyang froze mid-sentence. Her eyes twitched.

"How many times do I need to repeat myself? Don't call me that!"

She said under her breath.

Lin Xuan straightened.

"You are Young Master's fiancée. So, I must address you properly."

"We're here as disciples of the Heaven Sword Sect. Just... call me Senior Sister or something."

Lin Xuan's brow furrowed ever so slightly.

"That would be inappropriate."

Chu Ziyang pinched the bridge of her nose.

"It's not inappropriate. It's normal."

Lin Xuan didn't waver.

"As you say, Young Mistress."

"You—!"

Bai Xueqing, standing nearby, let out a cold snort.

"Just let him call you what he wants, Ziyang'er. It's not like people don't already know."

Sigh!

"And just why is he not participating?"

"Who knows? He does what he wants anyway."

Bai Xueqing replied.

"Anyways, it must be something like the competition is beneath him or something."

Chu Ziyang said. With Bai Zihan's personality, she knew it would be something like this or similar.

As for the rumors about him being scared, there was no way she would believe it—even if Bai Zihan himself said so.

With his strength, it was more a question of whether he would bully others rather than being afraid of them.

Even those so-called geniuses under 30 were afraid of him—let alone those under 25.

Lin Xuan, meanwhile, stood silently behind them like an unmoving shadow—gaze calm, back straight, utterly undisturbed by the commotion around him.

He would've objected to even a small blemish on Bai Zihan's name, but since it was Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyang saying it, he said nothing.

\*\*\*

Crimson Thunder Palace Waiting Area!

Lei Zhensheng leaned against a wall with his arms crossed. Lightning flickered across his shoulders like twitching serpents.

"Tch," he muttered. "The Bai Clan sent their second-rate disciples?"

A youth behind him laughed.

"Maybe Bai Zihan really is scared. Can't say I blame him. After all, you are participating."

Lei Zhensheng cracked his knuckles.

"I was in seclusion for a few months and everyone started to think that he was some kind of invincible person. I was looking forward to decimating him."

Lei Zhensheng looked a bit disappointed.

"A pity. But whatever. My target is still here!"

"Indeed! Crushing Bai Xueqing would be good enough to have your fame spread far and wide."

Although Bai Zihan's fame had risen rapidly, it was only recent. Before him, it was Bai Xueqing whose talent was said to be one of the strongest.

So, for one looking to be crowned the strongest of their generation, she was someone that must be defeated.

This would also silence those who claimed that younger generations had surpassed the older ones.

"I will show them what it means to fight against me!"

Lei Zhensheng said excitedly as his Thunder Qi flared.

Celestial Jade Hall Waiting Area!

Shui Lian'er sat in silence, a jade lotus blooming beneath her. Her eyes were closed, and a soft frost clung to the air around her.

One of her junior sisters whispered, "Senior Sister Lian'er... it seems like that Bai Zihan is not really going to participate."

"Is that so?"

She said softly.

"I thought I would get to challenge him—the one said to have defeated Mo Tianji. Pity!"

"Hah? That must be a lie! You know how fearsome that devil is. How could it be possible for a junior like Bai Zihan to defeat him?"

Shui Lian'er's junior sister continued.

"Even the Senior Sister and Brother who went to the Ancient Ruin said that they don't know about that. Those Bai Clan members must be the ones spreading those lies!"

Well, of course they wouldn't admit it.

Because admitting it would also mean admitting how they were humiliated and threatened by Bai Zihan in the Ancient Ruins.

Nobody wanted to remember just humiliation and so they collectively decided to forget about it.

Those people, after reporting back to the clan, went straight into seclusion.

And of course, before they went, they didn't admit they were defeated by someone younger—or that their lives had been hanging by a thread under Bai Zihan's threat.

They simply feigned ignorance.

Li Clan Waiting Hall!

Every disciple looked at a single person, their expressions full of confidence.

And it was none other than Li Meiying, the Li Clan Leader's daughter.

Li Meiying stood at the edge of the terrace, her long black and red robes fluttering slightly in the wind.

Behind her, several younger Li disciples were seated, talking in hushed tones—their anger and humiliation from the last war still simmering.

"I still remember that battle..."

One of the younger Li disciples muttered, his voice tight with suppressed rage.

"We lost dozens of our best that day."

"They didn't just defeat us. They humiliated us. Our banners were trampled... our elders forced to retreat. Some of our kin never came back."

Silence hung for a moment, thick with shame and fury.

"This time, we'll take it back."

The others straightened.

"This time, the Dragon and Phoenix Competition belongs to us."

"Although it's a pity that Bai Zihan isn't participating, at least we can defeat other Bai Clan members."

"We'll show them that it was a fluke. That the Li Clan still deserves to be number one!"

"Let them remember that we were always stronger!"

Their words burned with conviction now, their auras flaring subtly in response. Confidence surged in their hearts—but all of it pointed toward one figure:

Li Meiyong!

As she stood at the front, her expression calm but sharp, all eyes turned to her—filled with expectation, trust, and something more.

Hope!

She was their spearhead. Their redemption. The one who would carve the Li Clan's name back into glory.

Li Meiyong didn't say anything but stood tall with confidence.

(F\*\*K! How do you think I will win?)

On the outside, she was full of calm and confidence—but inside, it couldn't be more different.

Panic! Fear!

She was feeling almost every negative emotion.

(What revenge? Do you think I'm stronger than Li Ming?)

Li Ming was someone stronger than her—and look at what happened to him.

There was no way she could defeat someone that even Li Ming couldn't.

She felt very lucky that during the war with the Bai Clan, she had been in seclusion. Otherwise, she thought, she might have been the one in a wheelchair instead of Li Ming.

(Fortunately, that devil isn't participating.)

Obviously referring to Bai Zihan.

Although others claimed it was a pity he wasn't participating, she considered it their good fortune.

Otherwise... who knows?

She might end up just like Li Ming.

Of course, she couldn't show her true self to others—as the beacon of hope and confidence for her fellow clan members.

"Don't worry. Victory is already mine!"

She said with confidence as other disciples cheered.

Zhao Clan Waiting Hall!

Unlike the neighboring waiting halls where conversations stirred and anticipation buzzed, this room was eerily quiet.

There was no laughter, no light banter—only the weight of resentment and long-nurtured grudges.

Every Zhao disciple seated behind Zhao Chen carried the same look in their eyes: cold focus and quiet fury.

They weren't here to enjoy the Dragon and Phoenix Competition. They weren't even here to win.

They were here to redeem themselves.

The memory of their defeat—of the Bai Clan trampling their alliance, of elders wounded and disciples slain—still lingered like a fresh wound.

It had been one of the darkest years in Zhao Clan history.

The pressure was suffocating. No one needed to speak it aloud—everyone already understood.

There was no room for error. No space for mercy. No tolerance for failure.

Vengeance burned in their blood.

The Bai Clan had humiliated them.

Now, it was their turn to prove they still deserved to stand among the Empire's greats.

Zhao Chen's gaze remained fixed on the arena below, as if trying to carve their victory into reality through sheer will alone.

This wasn't a tournament for them.

It was war!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 224: Where Power Sits[  
1,577 words ]

*Chapter 224: Where Power Sits*

Above the arena, the spectator stands were divided into tiers.

At the highest level sat the Imperial Pavilion, adorned with golden drapes and phoenix motifs.

There, high officials and powerful guards gathered—along with a particular figure dressed in dark red imperial robes.

A hush spread across the stadium.

"That's the First Prince!"

"He's the Imperial Family's representative?"

"Prince Yu Zidi... Pity that in the Desolate Heaven Empire, just being the First Prince isn't enough to become Crown Prince."

...

Indeed, unlike many of the neighboring Empires, just being born first meant nothing in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

To become Crown Prince or Princess, one must prove they are capable of bearing that title.

If one of the princes or princesses had seized the Immortal Emperor's Inheritance, they would have been crowned the next heir and eventually the Emperor.

But of course, that didn't happen, and the seat of the Crown Prince was still empty—despite the rumors about the Emperor's failing health.

The First Prince's eyes scanned the arena with excitement and calculation.

This was a gathering not just of the future of the Desolate Heaven Empire, but of individuals with vast connections—those who could become tomorrow's powerhouses.

If he couldn't find the right opportunity to win them over, becoming Emperor would become an increasingly distant possibility.

To his right sat representatives from various noble houses.

To his left, several ministers accompanied him.

Although he hadn't become Crown Prince despite being the eldest, it wasn't as though he lacked advantages.

In areas like education, cultivation, and networking—he had a significant head start over his siblings.

Just being sent as a representative of the Emperor also proved that he was much closer to the title of Emperor than his other siblings.

Then there was the other VIP section, reserved for the major sects and clans like the Bai, Li, and Zhao Clans, alongside the Heaven Sword Sect, Crimson Thunder Palace, Azure Sun Holy Sect, and Celestial Jade Hall.

Many eyes drifted upward—it was rare to see such figures in person at other times.

Some of the elders were once legends in their own right, and the air buzzed with murmurs and nostalgia.

Many of these elders had themselves participated in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition in their youth, adding to the atmosphere's weight.

"I still remember when I made my debut on this stage."

"Haha... You mean when you got taken out in one strike?"

"T-That... is because my opponent happens to be Bai Tiancheng!"

...

Laughter echoed lightly between sips of spirit wine and murmured commentary.

Just then—

A faint breeze stirred.

But like the stillness before a blade is drawn, the entire arena seemed to shift.

A single figure, clad in deep black and white robes trimmed with faint silver, stepped casually into the Bai Clan's reserved pavilion.

No grand entrance.

No fanfare.

Just a quiet arrival.

Yet, one by one, heads turned.

From the nobles in the lower stands to the elders above—even the ministers seated beside the First Prince subtly leaned forward.

Bai Zihan had arrived.

His steps were relaxed, almost lazy, as if the entire spectacle bored him.

Yet the air around him carried a kind of subdued sharpness—like a divine blade still sheathed.

He didn't speak as he passed the Bai disciples.

He didn't bow to the elders.

He simply walked up to the center seat of the Bai Clan's viewing area—the one meant for the Clan Leader—and sat down.

No one stopped him.

No one questioned it.

Even Elders known for their strict adherence to protocol, gave only a silent nod of acknowledgment.

There was no announcement, no declaration.

But in that moment, it became clear to everyone—

In the absence of Bai Tianheng...

Bai Zihan was the one in command.

It wasn't forced.

It wasn't arranged.

It was natural.

As if the Bai Clan, consciously or not, had already accepted him as their next patriarch.

"Haha... Zihan'er, you've come!"

One of the elders chuckled, his tone warm yet laced with respect.

Bai Zihan offered a slight nod, his expression calm.

"Father asked me to represent the Bai Clan," he said lazily. "Since I was already here, I figured I might as well."

Their gazes then shifted to the unfamiliar youth standing quietly behind Bai Zihan.

"And this one?"

An elder asked, eyes narrowing slightly in curiosity.

The young man straightened, his nerves barely hidden despite his effort to appear composed.

He stepped forward and cupped his fists respectfully.

"Elders, I am Kong Zhanghong. I serve Young Master Zihan."

His voice was steady, though his back was damp with sweat.

The elders gave him a cursory glance, then quickly lost interest.

A few nodded absently, while others didn't bother acknowledging him at all.

To them, he was merely a servant—who he was didn't matter. As long as Bai Zihan brought him, that was enough.

The elders also didn't bring up the matter of Bai Zihan inviting Nie Fengzhuo to the Bai Clan, as they trusted he had his reasons.

After all, that much was already evident from his decision to bring Lin Xuan into the clan—an act considered one of the greatest investments Bai Zihan had ever made.

Across the pavilion, expressions darkened.

From the side of the Li and Zhao Clans, the atmosphere turned visibly colder the moment Bai Zihan took his seat.

Several elders narrowed their eyes, their faces tightening with disdain. One scoffed beneath his breath, voice laced with venom.

"He doesn't even bother to greet his elders. Arrogant to the bone!"

Another leaned closer, lips curled in contempt.

"Hiding behind his reputation, is he? Must be afraid. Otherwise, why isn't he participating?"

A few sharp laughs followed—quiet, bitter.

"He acts like he's already won. Typical Bai Clan arrogance."

But for all their bravado, there was an unspoken truth none of them dared admit aloud: none truly believed he was afraid or weak.

If anything, the fact that Bai Zihan had come just to watch but not participate made it clear—he saw this competition as beneath him.

They could mock.

They could insult.

But they couldn't ignore him.

On the sect side—

The elders of the Crimson Thunder Palace visibly frowned.

Their disciple, once hailed as one of the top geniuses, had perished at Bai Zihan's hands in the Ancient Ruins.

And to make things worse, they couldn't do anything, as Bai Zihan continued to threaten the lives of their remaining disciples.

With one already dead, they dared not risk another.

This was the same for nearly every sect and clan whose members had been present in the ruins.

In the Azure Sun Holy Sect's pavilion, several younger disciples shifted uneasily.

Bai Zihan's name still echoed in the nightmares of many who had survived that expedition.

One was the image of him humiliating and toying with Mo Tianji; the other was him casually killing a genius from the Crimson Thunder Palace in an instant.

Everyone understood—even if they didn't say it out loud—that despite his youth, Bai Zihan was more cunning, more dangerous, than any genius of his generation.

He stood above them.

Even First Prince Yu Zidi raised a brow.

"So that's him," he murmured, his voice a mix of interest and caution.

"Doesn't look like much..."

But he knew better.

His younger sibling had gone to attend Bai Zihan's birthday just last year, hoping to draw him to their side.

He also knew that even his notoriously man-hating sister had offered marriage to win him over.

That alone said everything.

So of course, Yu Zidi wanted him too—if his siblings valued Bai Zihan so highly, how could he not?

Though he looked unassuming beyond his striking appearance, it only took one glance at the faces around him to realize otherwise.

He inspired either fear, hatred, or admiration—and sometimes, all three at once.

Yu Zidi found it a pity that he couldn't properly assess the young man's strength, since Bai Zihan wasn't participating.

He had investigated everything to try and bring him over—but there wasn't much he could do.

He tried to find people Bai Zihan cared about or loved, hoping to use them as leverage. But the results were disappointing.

His parents?

Perhaps since it's quite normal but don't know for certain about Bai Zihan. But even so what can be do with that info?

Threatening or manipulating the Desolate Heaven Empire's strongest clan's leader?

If he had that kind of power, why would he even need Bai Zihan?

His mother?

No slouch either. A Rank 6 Alchemist—one of the best in the Empire.

His sister?

Not much attachment there. Especially not after Bai Zihan recruited her ex-fiancé right under her nose. If anything, that just proved how little he cared.

His fiancée?

Merely a title. No romance. Just a political, arranged engagement.

His enemies?

Countless!

But unlike with others, he couldn't offer Bai Zihan protection from them in exchange for allegiance.

Doing so would mean potentially opposing the Li and Zhao Clans—forces he might one day need on his side.

Treasure?

Would someone like Bai Zihan even lack any?

Rumors say he wields a Heaven-grade sword and has even rewarded his servant with an Earth-grade artifact.

That sounded outrageous, but even if only half were true, it said a lot.

After all his investigations, he had come to only one conclusion:

Never make Bai Zihan your enemy.

No matter how powerful you were—none ended up in a good state after opposing him.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

*Chapter 225: Dragon and Phoenix Competition Starts!*

A booming voice suddenly echoed across the arena, magnified by spiritual transmission techniques.

It rolled through the air like thunder, silencing the last murmurs of conversation and laughter.

"Welcome, cultivators, nobles, and honored guests to the 137th Dragon and Phoenix Competition!"

The crowd erupted into cheers and applause.

The voice belonged to a tall, imposing man clad in silver-blue robes embroidered with the emblem of the Imperial Tournament Office—a roaring dragon curled around a blazing phoenix.

He floated midair atop a flying jade platform that hovered over the center of the arena, his presence commanding and authoritative.

"I am Yan Minglan, Referee and Overseer for this year's competition."

His cultivation was at the Spirit Severing Realm, which was appropriate for overseeing a competition between geniuses in the Soul Formation Realm.

If someone weaker presided over the matches, they might not be able to intervene when necessary.

There were also several guards stationed to prevent interference from outsiders.

Additionally, a protective formation barrier had been erected to ensure the audience wouldn't be harmed by stray attacks from the participants.

The referee raised a hand, and golden light spread from his sleeve, forming a shimmering screen in the sky—an array projection displaying all the names of the registered participants.

Hundreds of them. Each one glowing faintly with qi.

"As you all know, this event is held once every three years. A tradition older than many sects, where the youth of our Empire and beyond compete for glory, opportunity, and legacy."

He let the words sink in.

"Now... allow me to explain the rules."

The array in the sky changed.

Dozens of circular brackets emerged, each one representing a battle pairing.

"This year's competition will follow a knockout format. Participants will be randomly assigned an opponent at the start of each round."

A ripple of excitement passed through the crowd.

"Victory means advancement. Defeat means elimination. Only those who stand at the top of their generation will reach the final rounds."

He extended a hand, and streaks of light burst from the array, spinning rapidly.

"The first round matchups will now be determined!"

The projection swirled with speed before slowing... names began to lock into place.

Gasps and excited murmurs rippled through the crowd as each pairing formed.

Among them—

"What? My opponent is Bai Xueqing? Why is my luck so bad!"

"Hehe... My opponent is just in the Early Nascent Soul Realm. This is going to be easy!"

"Damn! I got Lei Zhensheng as my opponent."

"Jin Yuanzhan vs Lin Xuan? Lin Xuan really got unlucky."

...

For most of the first-round matches, it was easy to guess who the victor would be—including the Lin Xuan match, which most believed would be won by Jin Yuanzhan of the Azure Sun Holy Sect.

Nie Fengzhuo looked at the draw and was disappointed to find that his opponent wasn't Bai Xueqing.

Moreover, it seemed that to fight Bai Xueqing, he would need to win all seven matches and reach the final, as she was on the other side of the bracket.

Bai Xueqing also noticed this—and her ex-fiancé's name—but felt certain that he would never make it to the final.

Rather, she looked at other competitors who she thought were more worthy of her attention, especially Shui Lian'er of the Celestial Jade Hall.

Shui Lian'er was said to possess mysterious abilities—able to see through one's nature and exploit it to win with ease.

Most of her past opponents had nothing to say and didn't even know how they were defeated.

So, she was definitely one of the opponents to look out for.

The referee's voice rang out once more, loud and clear.

"Match One—Bai Xueqing of the Bai Clan versus Yi Mingyu of the Crimson Thunder Palace. Step forward!"

All eyes turned.

One of the top contenders was about to fight. While few expected the match to be exciting—her opponent was clearly outmatched—there was still a sense of anticipation.

After all, they were about to witness one of the most talented cultivators in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire in action.

And beyond her strength, there was no denying it—her beauty was in a league of its own.

From the Heaven Sword Sect's side, Bai Xueqing rose calmly, her white and silver robes fluttering in the breeze.

On the opposite side, a youth from the Crimson Thunder Palace stepped up, his red-gold uniform stiff with tension.

Yi Mingyu. Mid Nascent Soul Realm!

He was tall and broad-shouldered, his aura not weak—but even now, sweat had begun to bead along his temples.

His grip on his spear was tight.

Too tight.

"B-Bai Xueqing..."

He muttered under his breath nervously.

Based on strength alone, he was certain he ranked among the top 20 participants—but with Bai Xueqing as his opponent, he might not even make it past the first round.

(No! I can do it! I just need to find the right opportunity!)

Having come this far, he wasn't going to give up without a fight.

Regaining his determination, he took his stance with a spear in hand.

The referee gave the signal.

"Begin!"

What followed wasn't a battle.

Yi Mingyu surged forward with full strength, lightning qi crackling around his spear as he aimed straight at Bai Xueqing.

The spear thrust out—fast, powerful, well-practiced.

And yet—

Clink!

With a flick of her wrist, Bai Xueqing's sword met the spear.

Not clashed—brushed it aside.

The spear twisted from its trajectory like it had been slapped by a divine hand.

And in that same instant, before Yi Mingyu could react—

Her sword was already at his throat.

The cold edge kissed the thin skin beneath his jaw.

His legs buckled. His eyes went wide.

He dropped his spear.

"I—I surrender!"

His voice cracked.

He fell to his knees, clutching his chest, barely able to breathe. Tears rimmed his eyes—not from pain, but humiliation.

He felt delusional for even thinking he had a chance. The moment his name was drawn against Bai Xueqing, he should've given up.

The crowd gasped.

Some applauded. Others fell silent.

So quick. So clean. Not even a second had passed.

She hadn't even moved her feet.

Bai Xueqing retracted her sword.

She didn't look proud. Or amused. Or victorious.

She simply turned around and walked off the platform, sword sliding back into its sheath with a soft click.

Just another match.

Just another moment.

Onn the Bai Clan's side, even her elders said nothing. They'd expected this.

It was the same for Bai Zihan, who lazily closed his eyes again. The result was exactly as expected.

The referee's voice echoed again—

"Winner: Bai Xueqing!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 226: Lin Xuan's Turn[ 1,030 words ]

### *Chapter 226: Lin Xuan's Turn*

What followed after Bai Xueqing's effortless victory was a string of matches that—despite the prestige of the tournament—offered little to no suspense.

Most concluded in under a dozen moves.

Some didn't even last three moves.

One youth from the Ironwood Valley was knocked unconscious before he even drew his weapon.

Another girl from the Golden Feather Pavilion was sent flying by a single palm strike.

Even the referee's voice began to sound mechanical as he announced the outcomes.

"Winner: Lei Zhensheng of the Crimson Thunder Palace."

"Winner: Li Meiying of Li Clan."

"Winner: Shui Lian'er of the Celestial Jade Hall."

Her match, in particular, was strange.

The opponent had frozen mid-strike, eyes glazed, as if staring into a void only he could see.

Then he had simply dropped to one knee, defeated, before even understanding what had happened.

A few murmurs circled the crowd, especially from the sects who had done their research.

"Another win without lifting a hand..."

"Celestial Jade Hall's spiritual arts are terrifying..."

"She's looking at the crowd now—don't make eye contact."

And then—

After another batch of one-sided victories, the shimmering projection in the sky shifted again.

The next match.

"Match Forty—Lin Xuan of the Heaven Sword Sect versus Jin Yuanzhan of the Azure Sun Holy Sect!"

A wave of interest rolled through the arena.

Not because they expected an intense battle—but because of who his opponent was.

Jin Yuanzhan was a star of the Azure Sun Holy Sect, having broken through to the early Soul Formation Realm.

He had also fused his core with a piece of the Sun Dao Stone, making all the Azure Sun Holy Sect's techniques one level stronger than what they already were.

Meanwhile, Lin Xuan...

"I heard that Heaven Sword Sect has been preparing the next Sect Leader and he seems to be the candidate."

"He went from handyman to core disciple. It's said that his talent is on par with Bai Xinyue, you know, the one who was taken away by Flowing Moon Sect."

"Although he is talented, he has only been seriously cultivated for less than two years. And he is only in the Nascent Soul realm. He is no match for Jin Yuanzhan."

"Sigh! Another disappointing fight, I guess!"

...

Some sect elders and even a few envoys leaned forward with narrowed eyes.

There was curiosity, yes—but mostly only because Lin Xuan was cultivated quite well by the Heaven Sword Sect Leader.

As for the result, they too believed that it would be Jin Yuanzhan's victory.

"Tsk! What do these people know about Lin Xuan? They are in for a big surprise!"

Kong Zhanghong couldn't help but get angry.

As fellow servants of Bai Zihan, they got along well.

Not to mention, despite being a Core Disciple, Lin Xuan always treated him with respect.

So, it wasn't unusual that he would get angry when he heard about others looking down on him.

Bai Zihan also had to agree with Kong Zhanghong.

Although he also didn't know for certain whether Lin Xuan would win, especially seeing that his opponent wasn't just anyone.

But to underestimate him would be a big mistake, especially considering he is one of the Heaven Chosen Ones.

Lin Xuan stepped onto the platform quietly.

His robes were plain white, his sword unremarkable. He looked composed, but nothing about him stood out except his handsome face.

He looked in Bai Zihan's direction, silently telling him to look at him and see how much progress he had made.

Across from him, Jin Yuanzhan landed with a burst of flame, red-gold robes billowing dramatically as spiritual Qi flooded the stage.

Jin Yuanzhan's boots struck the platform with a low boom, ripples of fire bursting beneath his feet.

The crowd leaned in as he tilted his head, gaze settling on Lin Xuan with open amusement.

He let out a laugh—light, mocking, echoing across the silent arena.

"This is who I'm fighting?"

His voice carried naturally, full of disdain, his every word riding the wind of his flaming aura.

"You should give up. No shame in admitting when you're outmatched. Let's not waste my time"

Lin Xuan didn't respond.

He merely stood, quiet and still, sword sheathed at his side. His posture relaxed. His eyes calm.

To him, this kind of taunt was nothing new.

Ever since stepping into the path of cultivation, ever since climbing from the servant quarters into the core ranks, people had been doubting him.

Jin Yuanzhan's smile thinned.

"You're just going to ignore me?"

His eyes narrowed.

"I've heard about you. Heaven Sword Sect's miracle handyman. Suddenly displaying the talent of a top genius and being blessed by the Heavens."

He scoffed.

"But no matter how you dress it, a servant is a servant."

Still, there was no reaction from Lin Xuan.

Jin stepped closer, flames licking the edge of his sleeves.

"And wasn't it Bai Zihan you used to serve under? Or I heard that you still do?"

His grin widened.

"I suppose that makes sense. He is a coward, after all."

Lin Xuan's brows twitched for the first time.

He didn't mind that Jin was insulting him, but insulting Bai Zihan—that was crossing the line.

But Jin wasn't finished.

"Bai Zihan—recently he has been making waves and even being called the most talented in our generation. As expected of him, spreading lies is his specialty."

Jin continued.

"But in the end, anyone could tell that he is but a coward. Even now, he is trying to hide it by not daring to participate. One of these days, I will unmask him myself."

That did it.

Lin Xuan's hand twitched toward his sword.

Then, he looked up—eyes sharper now, no longer calm. Anger clearly visible on his face.

"You can insult me," Lin Xuan said evenly, "but don't speak of Young Master. You don't deserve it!"

His voice wasn't loud.

And then Lin Xuan added, cold and clear:

"Say another word, and I'll kill you."

Jin Yuanzhan blinked.

And then laughed again—louder this time.

"Kill me?"

He echoed.

"You? A Nascent Soul brat?"

His aura flared, and the platform trembled under the heat of his power.

"You can try!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 227: Lin Xuan Vs Jin Yuanzhan! [ 1,624 words ]

*Chapter 227: Lin Xuan Vs Jin Yuanzhan!*

The referee raised a hand—then sliced it down like a blade.

"Begin!"

As soon as the signal was given, a golden sun blossomed behind Jin Yuanzhan's back—his flames surged forth, bathing the stage in intense heat.

"Die!"

Flames erupted instantly as Jin Yuanzhan surged forward, palm extended. A tidal wave of fire roared toward Lin Xuan, threatening to swallow the platform whole.

"Looks like Jin Yuanzhan isn't going to hold back."

"He is trying to end everything in one go!"

"Even his senior disciple in Soul Formation Realm couldn't defend against this move of his. Looks like Lin Xuan is done for."

...

With how serious and full-power Jin Yuanzhan was going from the start, many felt that the match was already decided.

It was a terrifying attack—meant to end things in one move.

But just before it landed—

Shiing!

A flash of silver light cut upward.

The flames split in half.

And Lin Xuan stepped forward, sword in hand, his robe fluttering in the scorched wind.

The crowd fell silent.

Jin's smile vanished.

(What?)

Their first exchange... and Jin hadn't even left a mark.

Lin Xuan's sword wasn't just fast—it was precise. Clean. Controlled. His footwork, subtle and unshakable.

Jin Yuanzhan didn't wait despite still being in a state of shock.

His aura flared again, and three blazing spears of flame materialized in the air above him, spiraling down like falling stars.

This time, Lin Xuan moved.

He weaved through the spears with barely an inch to spare, his sword flashing as he closed the distance in a blink.

Clang!

Jin blocked with a suddenly conjured shield of flame, but the force of Lin Xuan's blade sent him skidding back several paces.

Jin stared at his trembling arm.

(He's... keeping up with me?)

It didn't make sense.

He was a full realm higher. He had trained in the Azure Sun Sect's elite techniques. He had absorbed the Sun Dao Stone!

But somehow, Lin Xuan wasn't just surviving—

He was matching him, move for move.

Kong Zhanghong clenched his fists in excitement.

"That's it, Lin Xuan... Show them!"

The battle was only just beginning.

CLANG! SLASH! CLANG!

The arena rang with the sound of clashing forces—fire and sword, overwhelming spiritual pressure and refined footwork.

The longer the match dragged on, the more confused the crowd became.

It wasn't that Lin Xuan was overpowering Jin Yuanzhan—he wasn't.

It was that he wasn't losing.

Despite being one full realm lower, he dodged with hairbreadth precision, blocked with fluid ease, and countered only when necessary.

Each movement he made was honed—razor-sharp and minimal, like a sword refined a thousand times in a furnace.

Jin Yuanzhan's flame surged once more, scorching the air as he launched a new barrage of attacks.

Fire serpents danced around the battlefield, scorching the platform. Flame spikes erupted from the ground like volcanic bursts.

And yet—

Lin Xuan flowed through it like water.

One step forward, two sideways. A twist of the wrist, a narrow parry. He never wasted movement. Never flinched.

"Lin Xuan's not winning... but he's not losing either."

"Is he going to defend the entire time?"

"Look closely—his footwork, his sword angle. It's near perfect..."

A few old elders' eyes narrowed.

They could tell that while Jin Yuanzhan had a huge advantage with his higher cultivation realm, Lin Xuan also seemed to have his own talent to deal with that disadvantage.

It was his mastery over the techniques which far surpassed that of Jin Yuanzhan.

Jin's mastery of his technique was also quite good, but that paled in the face of Lin Xuan, who had nearly perfected them and could use them whenever the situation called for it.

By using footwork when dodging, using defensive techniques when he couldn't dodge, and also counterattacking when Jin Yuanzhan let down his guard, he was doing everything perfectly.

Lin Xuan could have easily won, however, his opponent had superior strength, and although crude, his technique made sure that Lin Xuan couldn't land any hit on him.

And although Jin Yuanzhan was seemingly winning, he—the person himself—couldn't help but get angrier and frustrated.

The one he thought was just an ant that he could squash at any time was giving him a tough time.

Moreover, he couldn't accept the fact that he was only stronger than Lin Xuan due to his superior Cultivation Realm.

He, who thought that he would win the Dragon and Phoenix Competition easily, was now struggling against a former handyman. His ego couldn't accept it.

"This can't be!"

He wasn't holding back, but still it wasn't enough to end the fight.

"Enough hiding!"

He threw his arms wide, forming a burning wheel behind him, like a miniature sun.

"You think you can win by turtling up and dodging forever?"

His sneer deepened.

"No matter how refined your sword looks, you're just a bug resisting fate!"

Lin Xuan didn't answer. He neither bristled nor reacted to the taunt.

He simply waited.

Another flurry of fire.

More pressure.

Jin Yuanzhan had shifted tactics—each attack now faster, heavier, trying to crack Lin Xuan's defense.

"FIGHT BACK!"

He roared, slamming his foot into the stage and sending out a wave of sunfire.

"You want to be a hero? Want to prove you're not just Bai Zihan's dog?"

He gathered flame into his palm, condensing it into a burning spear, hotter than molten metal.

"Then TAKE THIS!"

Once again, a powerful attack which seemed to be even stronger than his first one.

But Lin Xuan didn't flinch.

He stood still, breathing slow and deep.

(Now!)

And then, at the exact moment the spear reached him—

He moved.

SHIING!

The air split.

Not the flame. Not just the spear. But space itself.

A blinding flash of sword light erupted, tearing through everything in its path.

The attack that came was not ordinary.

A single, unassuming horizontal slash but it left a shining arc in the sky.

And Jin Yuanzhan's eyes widened in horror.

(That technique—!)

Jin Yuanzhan barely had time to react.

The shining arc cleaved through everything—fire, sky, even the aura surrounding his body.

His flaming spear shattered mid-flight, incinerated by the sword light. His protective qi barrier cracked like brittle glass.

A thin red line appeared across his chest.

"Urgh—!"

Jin staggered, coughing blood.

The entire arena fell silent.

Even the most hardened cultivators watching from the VIP stands narrowed their eyes.

"That was..."

"The Ten Thousand Sword Nirvana Slash...!"

"Impossible. That's a forbidden-level technique from the Heaven Sword Sect! Only sect leaders and sword grandmasters can comprehend even a trace of it!"

"He's... just a Nascent Soul junior! How can he wield something like that?!"

Amid the murmurs and stunned awe, Lin Xuan slowly exhaled.

"Hah... Hah... "

His sword lowered. His breathing was heavier, a faint sheen of sweat on his brow.

That technique—though powerful—had taxed his qi reserves immensely.

He wasn't at his limit...

But he was close.

If Jin Yuanzhan had taken that hit cleanly, the battle would've ended. Lin Xuan would've won.

But he didn't.

He was wounded... but not defeated.

And he was furious.

"...You... insect!"

Jin's eyes burned—no longer just with fire, but with madness.

"I gave you a chance to die cleanly."

He extended a trembling hand to his chest—right over his dantian—and shoved it in.

Gasps erupted.

"No... no, he wouldn't!"

"He's burning his core of Sun Dao Stone!"

"That's insane! If he fails, his foundation will collapse!"

Inside his core, the legendary Sun Dao Stone pulsed like a heartbeat.

Burning through his Sun Dao Stone would mean that after this fight, he would be severely injured and perhaps couldn't advance to the next round.

But Jin Yuanzhan didn't care.

He couldn't afford to lose.

Not to him.

Not to a former handyman.

"RRRRAAAHHHH!!!"

His body convulsed, flames bursting from every pore. His golden aura ignited with unprecedented brilliance, becoming a blazing inferno that towered into the sky.

The arena's barrier groaned, shimmering violently under the pressure.

"His Qi is increasing!"

"He's pushing his Soul Formation power to the peak—possibly beyond!"

"But at what cost... This is madness!"

"Perhaps it isn't. Lin Xuan is that strong of an opponent. To be able to push Jin Yuanzhan to such a state, who would have thought—and he is only at Nascent Soul realm."

Jin Yuanzhan's feet hit the ground with explosive force.

And then—

He vanished.

Lin Xuan's eyes snapped open. His body moved on instinct, sword rising—

BOOM!

A fist wreathed in sunfire slammed into his blade, sending him flying.

"No, you don't!"

Before he could recover, Jin appeared above him and delivered a brutal kick that cratered the stage beneath them.

Lin Xuan coughed blood. He tried to parry, but Jin's strikes were now heavier—wild but unstoppable.

This wasn't swordplay.

This was brute-force brawling backed by raw strength.

Flames tore across the platform. Each strike sent shockwaves rippling through the barrier.

Lin Xuan was fast—but not fast enough. His qi was nearly depleted. His muscles ached. His body burned.

Still—he fought.

Parry. Dodge. Counter.

But each defense grew sloppier.

Each step—heavier.

And Jin wasn't stopping.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

"You don't get to humiliate me!"

A burning punch to the ribs.

"You don't get to stand above me!"

A brutal elbow to the back.

"You don't get to look down on me!!"

One final strike—a full-powered flame-enchanted palm—slammed into Lin Xuan's chest, blasting him across the arena.

He hit the ground hard.

This time, he didn't rise.

The entire stage was silent.

Even the flames had stopped roaring—flickering low now that Jin Yuanzhan's rage was spent.

Smoke curled from Lin Xuan's robes. Blood dripped from his lips. He tried to move...

But the referee stepped forward, hand raised.

"...Winner—Jin Yuanzhan!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 228: Even in Defeat, He Shined [ 1,517 words ]

*Chapter 228: Even in Defeat, He Shined*

Shock!

Silence!

Even those who favored Jin couldn't cheer.

Because everyone had seen it—

The truth behind the "victory."

Jin Yuanzhan had barely won.

He had to burn his core, cripple himself, and expend a legendary artifact's power... just to defeat a man one entire realm lower than him.

A man once considered a nobody.

Lin Xuan, lying there, bloodied and broken, had still struck the deepest blow of the match—

To Jin Yuanzhan's pride.

Moreover, everyone knew that after this match, Jin Yuanzhan's chance of winning the Dragon and Phoenix Competition was almost zero.

Gasps still lingered in the air like the fading embers on the stage.

"...He lost?"

"No... he won," an elder muttered, eyes narrowed as he gazed at the scorched platform. "Even in defeat... he stole the spotlight."

Lin Xuan's body was carefully lifted off the stage by the medical team.

As they began preparing Grade-2 healing pills to stabilize him, a sharp voice cut through the air.

"Wait!"

Kong Zhanghong stepped forward.

With a flick of his wrist, a jade bottle flew through the air and landed gently in one of the medic's hands.

"Use this instead," he said. "Young Master Bai has given them. Feed it to Lin Xuan."

The medics paused, startled. One of them opened the bottle and gasped.

"Grade-5 Healing Pills..."

There was no room for hesitation.

Bai Zihan's name carried the weight of a mountain, and to refuse an order from him was unthinkable.

Not to mention, indeed Grade-5 Healing pills was far better than what they want to give to Lin Xuan as emergency treatment.

Without another word, they followed Kong Zhanghong's instruction.

One of the Grade-5 pills was crushed and its powder dissolved into Lin Xuan's system through a specialized technique since Lin Xuan can't take it himself.

Almost instantly, a warm golden glow spread across his battered form.

Cracks in his meridians began to mend, the pallor of his skin lessened, and his chaotic breath gradually evened out.

The medics exchanged quiet glances.

The effect was remarkable. Far beyond what their prepared pills could have achieved.

"Stabilization complete!"

One of them reported softly, reverently.

And just like that, Lin Xuan—though unconscious—was no longer in critical danger.

The flames were gone. Jin Yuanzhan stood in the center of the arena, shoulders heaving, sweat pouring from every pore, his face pale beneath the lingering glow of his sunfire.

And yet all eyes were still on the one who lost.

Did he win or did he lose?

He questioned this for a long time, until he too collapsed from the exhaustion of his Qi and the overexertion of his strength.

Another medical team immediately rushed to help him as well.

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Elder Qinglan's eyes burned with quiet intensity as she watched Lin Xuan's unconscious form being taken away from the arena.

"...That slash," she finally said, her voice soft but razor-sharp, laced with Sword Intent. "The Ten Thousand Sword Nirvana Slash."

She didn't think that Tian Yuheng would have already taught this technique to Lin Xuan.

That practically meant that Tian Yuheng considered him as heir and was willing to pass down the position to Lin Xuan.

(That might be a problem!)

It wasn't that she personally had a problem with Lin Xuan—neither with his character nor his talent.

Rather, it was his continued loyalty to Bai Zihan, still regarding him as his master, that troubled her.

If that remained unchanged in the future, the Heaven Sword Sect might well end up as nothing more than a lackey of the Bai Clan.

Still, recalling Yue Wushuang's words and thinking deeper on the matter, she understood something else—the Desolate Heaven Empire might be far too small to contain someone like Bai Zihan forever.

In any case, there was still time before such worries became urgent.

For now, she could focus on guiding Lin Xuan, nurturing him carefully... and ensuring that, when the time came, he would prioritize the Heaven Sword Sect above all else—especially if he were to inherit the mantle of Sect Leader.

The disciples around her stiffened. Some had doubted their eyes; others simply didn't recognize the technique for what it truly was.

Around her, shock and awe stirred the sect's young disciples.

Many had sneered at Lin Xuan not long ago—a mere handyman, someone barely qualified to serve tea, let alone stand in the same arena as the rising stars of the empire.

And now?

He had become so strong that they might not be even in the same league.

Among the disciples frozen in disbelief, a few wore pale faces and trembled not from excitement but fear.

Those were the ones who had once mocked Lin Xuan openly—shoving him aside, stealing his resources, and ordering him around as they pleased, all out of jealousy over his appearance and how the girls fawned over him despite him being just a handyman.

They had spat on his robes, laughed at his humble origins, and made his days in the sect a quiet misery.

Now, they could barely breathe.

"...That technique..."

One muttered, his voice hoarse.

"How... How did he use it?"

Another disciple swallowed hard, his hand clutching at the front of his robe to hide the way it trembled.

"That's a Heaven-grade technique. Even the Grand Elders never showed it in public."

They all remembered how Lin Xuan used to bow his head and silently endure.

And they all remembered how they thought he would amount to nothing.

Now, he had stood toe-to-toe with the best prodigy of the Azure Sun Sect—and almost won.

A bead of cold sweat rolled down a senior outer disciple's brow.

He had once kicked Lin Xuan for walking "too slowly" in the sect grounds. He had even broken the boy's arm, calling it "discipline."

(Please don't remember me!)

That thought echoed in more than one mind.

(Please forget everything. I'll never lay hands on anyone again. Please, please, let him never come for me.)

One even quietly clasped his hands in prayer toward the sky.

(I swear, I'll never bully another soul again! Not even if they're a spirit root cripple! I'll even clean the sword pavilion voluntarily, just don't let him come back looking for revenge.)

They didn't know whether Lin Xuan would remember them—or whether he even cared.

But one thing was clear:

The boy they once looked down on had become someone terrifying.

Someone they could no longer reach... and never dared provoke again.

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Elsewhere, cultivators from all walks of life debated fiercely.

"Did you see how he moved? Like he was the sword!"

"His footwork was insane... no wasted effort, no panic. I thought he was Soul Formation at first!"

"To think a Nascent Soul junior forced Jin Yuanzhan to burn his core and nearly cripple himself..."

"Forget the fight—that slash! It was like the sky tore open!"

"Lin Xuan. That's his name, right? That's not a name I'll forget anytime soon. Pity that he lost so soon."

...

"Master, that person... I have a sense familiarity with him."

"..."

Du Changsheng didn't reply immediately but indeed he also could sense an overwhelming talent from Lin Xuan.

"He is a very talent person perhaps he could also rise to become one of the Top Cultivator."

Du Changsheng complimented.

He didn't expect that apart from Nie Fengzhuo and Bai Zihan, there was still so many people in such a remote place that they could be considered a Top genius of his time as well.

(Is this truly the Golden Generation of Cultivation?)

He thought to himself.

Seeing such Heavenly given talents, he couldn't help but suspect this.

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On the stage, the overseer had already moved on with the next match—but as expected, compared to the fierce and breathtaking duel between Lin Xuan and Jin Yuanzhan, it barely stirred a ripple in the crowd's attention.

The matches continued in routine fashion. Most of the winners were exactly who people predicted—disciples from powerful sects or great clans easily overwhelming their lesser-known opponents.

And when it was two unfamiliar names facing off, the crowd simply chatted, dozed off, or left for refreshments.

The excitement had died down, and it showed.

Then finally came the turn of Nie Fengzhuo.

His opponent? A young cultivator from the Zhao Clan.

The Zhao cultivator stepped forward with a sneer, arms folded across his chest.

"Save yourself the humiliation. Surrender now and don't waste everyone's time."

He, like everyone else, assumed this match would go just like the previous fifty-two—predictable, one-sided, with victory going exactly as expected.

Even the earlier match between Lin Xuan and Jin Yuanzhan, though thrilling and tense, had ended in the expected outcome.

And now, once again, no one expected anything different.

Nie Fengzhuo, however, said nothing. He simply drew his sword.

That silent confidence clearly irked the Zhao Clan cultivator—it implied that Nie Fengzhuo actually believed he could win.

"You're just inviting humiliation!" he snapped.

The crowd watched, but without much interest. No one was holding out hope for a miracle.

However...

This time was different.

An upset!

Nie Fengzhuo won!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 229: First Round Ends[  
1,595 words ]

*Chapter 229: First Round Ends*

The Zhao Clan cultivator—confident, arrogant, and already envisioning his victory—charged in with a blaze of techniques.

After all, he was a Top Nascent Soul cultivator. And Nie Fengzhuo?

At best, early Nascent Soul. Worse, he had no major clan or sect backing him.

How strong could he possibly be?

Even at the same cultivation level, with his superior techniques, he believed it would be an easy victory for him.

That was the assumption.

And that assumption cost him everything.

Nie Fengzhuo effortlessly dodged the Zhao cultivator's techniques as if they were child's play, his movements calm and unhurried.

"H-How?"

All his attacks, it only hit air and nothing else.

Then when he has finished attacking, Nie Fengzhuo.

Nie Fengzhuo's sword moved only once.

A single slash!

Clean. Sharp. Deceptively simple.

The Zhao cultivator's defenses shattered as though they were paper, and blood sprayed across the stage.

In an instant, the proud scion of the Zhao Clan was lying on the ground, groaning and unconscious.

Gasps rippled through the arena.

He didn't just win.

He won instantly.

Everyone expected that the match would be instant, though it was the other way around than they thought. It was Nie Fengzhuo who ended things in one move.

A fight that was supposed to be a routine victory for the Zhao Clan... ended in total humiliation.

"Nie Fengzhuo is this powerful?"

"I heard that he was just trash! Who would have thought that the rumors were false?"

"Is this the best of the Zhao Clan? Truly disappointing from one considered among the Top 3 Strongest Clans of the Empire!"

...

While many complimented Nie Fengzhuo's strength, others questioned the Zhao Clan's strength.

After all, throughout this whole competition, none of the Major Clans had lost in such a disappointing manner—and that was especially true for the Li and Bai Clans.

Of course, the truth was that Nie Fengzhuo was strong, but one couldn't help but put down others who lost as well.

This made Zhao Chen angry.

This was the tournament where they were going to regain their lost face and trust, but actually, it got worse.

"That trash..."

Zhao Chen also couldn't help but blame his fellow clan members.

He wasn't the only one; others, including the elders of Zhao Clan, looked at him like an abandoned clan member, and anyone could tell that his life, once back in the Zhao Clan, wouldn't be anything less than miserable.

On the other hand, Bai Clan members didn't know what to say.

On one hand, they were happy that their enemy was getting humiliated like this.

But the fact that the one doing so happened to be their Young Miss's ex-fiancé, whose relationship with them wasn't great—

They also couldn't insult Nie Fengzhuo because Bai Zihan had shown the intention to recruit him into the clan.

Insulting him might be seen as insulting Bai Zihan's judgment. So, they could only watch without saying anything.

Bai Xueqing narrowed her eyes, surprised by Nie Fengzhuo's strength.

When she went to break their engagement, his cultivation was barely at the Qi Refining Stage.

Two years later, it reached the Nascent Soul realm, a feat that she couldn't say that she could do.

Moreover, she had thought that Nie Fengzhuo—despite his cultivation—would lose to others, because unlike the others from Major Clans and Sects, he probably didn't have powerful techniques.

Well, it was still not sure whether he did—because all it took was one move from him to end the fight instantly.

Still, outside, she remained calm and expressionless, like it didn't matter to her at all.

After that stunning upset, the matches resumed.

The remaining battles in the first round proceeded without surprises.

No other match stirred the arena the way Lin Xuan's clash with Jin Yuanzhan had... or Nie Fengzhuo's instant victory over the Zhao Clan's elite.

That was the only real upset of the entire first round.

Eventually, as the last scheduled match concluded and the dust settled over the arena, the overseer stepped forward once more, his voice echoing through the formation-amplified platform.

"That concludes the first round of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition!"

The crowd responded with polite applause—many were still murmuring about the earlier events.

"The second round will begin in three days' time," the overseer continued, arms clasped behind his back.

"During this period, all participants are advised to rest well, tend to their injuries, and recover their strength."

"Your true battles have only just begun!"

His voice rang out with subtle weight, and the crowd slowly began to disperse.

As the crowd filtered out and the disciples returned to their quarters, a quiet yet unmistakable tension hovered over the Bai Clan pavilion.

Bai Xueqing, accompanied by Chu Ziyang, made her way across the sect compound and into the Bai Clan's reserved area.

They passed several guards and attendants who bowed respectfully, though the atmosphere was thick with tension.

Inside the pavilion, Bai Zihan stood in quiet conversation with a few elders when he noticed their approach.

Bai Xueqing didn't waste time.

"You," she began. "What were you thinking?"

Bai Zihan stood calmly in the corridor behind her, his hands clasped behind his back, face serene as ever.

"You'll need to be more specific, dear sister."

He said lightly, though his gaze sharpened a touch.

"Nie Fengzhuo," she replied, whirling around. "You offered him a marriage to the Bai Clan?"

Her voice wasn't raised, but there was heat in it.

Bai Zihan didn't flinch.

"He's strong and someone who would be useful to me."

"You call that an explanation?"

Her brows arched.

"Yes!"

Bai Zihan replied without hesitation.

Bai Xueqing's hands clenched at her sides, her voice cold.

"Do you care about anything besides your damned schemes? Do you even think about how this affects my face?"

Bai Zihan met her glare calmly.

"No," he said flatly. "I don't care about face. Face doesn't protect the clan. Face doesn't build strength. It's vanity—and for the bigger picture, vanity must be sacrificed."

His words struck like a slap. Bai Xueqing stiffened.

"You say that as if you have some grand vision. But you don't," she bit out.

"If you had a plan—something real—explain it. I'd listen."

Her voice cracked slightly at the end, but her gaze was still sharp. Still demanding.

Bai Zihan's lips curved—though it wasn't quite a smile.

"I do have a plan, my dear sister," he said quietly. "But even if I explained it... you wouldn't understand."

Like—how would she even begin to understand that Nie Fengzhuo is the key to gaining an Immortal Emperor?

Not to mention, it was likely similar to bringing back the dead, which sounds even more impossible.

No matter which, one was more absurd than the other. And he can't explain how he's going to bring back the dead and only knows that Nie Fengzhuo can.

So, there are many things going on which Bai Zihan honestly can't explain and expect others to believe.

Her eyes widened in disbelief, fury rising behind them.

"And it has to be him?"

She asked, almost scoffing. "Out of everyone you could use for your so-called plan—it must be him?"

"It must be him!"

Otherwise, he doesn't even know what the first thing he would need to create a body for the soul.

"I see now," she whispered.

"This isn't because of some grand scheme that you have. You're doing this because you want to humiliate me."

Bai Zihan stared at Bai Xueqing for a second and sighed.

Perhaps he had been less considerate of Bai Xueqing's feelings, but when looking at what benefit he could get, he knew that Bai Xueqing's face wasn't worth it.

"What makes you think that?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Bai Xueqing didn't answer.

He took a step forward, gaze never leaving hers.

"Very well," he said at last. "Let's settle it another way."

Her brow furrowed.

"A bet," Bai Zihan said.

She blinked.

"If you win the Dragon and Phoenix Competition—I'll yield."

"Yield what?"

"Everything," he said plainly.

"You want me to stop? I will. I'll listen to whatever you have to say and obey it—three times. No matter what it is."

His tone didn't waver. Neither did his gaze.

That gave her pause.

"Three times..."

She echoed.

"I swear it," Bai Zihan replied. "On my name!"

Chu Ziyang, standing nearby, narrowed his eyes but stayed silent.

Three times—it seemed to be nothing, but not when the person was Bai Zihan.

He didn't say when and no limits. With his position, he was going to be Clan Leader and perhaps even more than that.

By that time, if one could keep hold of this promise, then there were many things that one could ask of Bai Zihan.

Of course, seeing that it was Bai Xueqing, Bai Zihan's sister, everyone knew that it wouldn't be too harmful to Bai Zihan or the Bai Clan itself.

So, they just watched, believing this to be just a little thing between siblings.

And motivating Bai Xueqing to win the competition was great for the Bai Clan as well.

Bai Xueqing's fingers curled slightly, her nails pressing into her palm.

"And if I lose?"

"If you lose," Bai Zihan said slowly, "then you shouldn't interfere with what I am doing."

"And perhaps... help me bring Nie Fengzhuo into the Bai Clan."

Bai Xueqing's eyes flashed.

"You want me to apologize to him?"

"If that's what it takes."

"..."

"Sure! Be ready to serve me like a servant after I win because that is what I am using those promises for!"

Novel Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! Chapter 230: He Who Does Not Come When Called

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

"Sure! Be ready to serve me like a servant after I win, because that's what I'm using those promises for!"

Bai Xueqing declared.

"No problem!"

Bai Zihan wasn't worried.

If Nie Fengzhuo couldn't even win and fulfill what was meant to be his destiny, then he might as well be called a scam of a Heaven's Chosen One.

Considering Bai Xueqing is his obstacle, if he can't overcome it, then perhaps a heart demon and stagnant cultivation are all he'll end up with.

Just think—if that can happen to a Heaven's Chosen One, then he's no Chosen One at all.

Though, if she did win, that would be interesting in itself.

So, Bai Zihan had no problem making the bet—even if it was just to shut Bai Xueqing up.

His gaze lingered on his sister for a moment longer, but when she said nothing else, he gave a slight nod and turned to leave.

Bai Zihan had just left with Kong Zhanghong, but before he could get far, someone blocked his path.

It was a young man in gold and silver robes, flanked by two silent guards.

The emblem on his chest bore the insignia of the Imperial Family.

The youth bowed deeply, cupping his fists.

"Greetings, Young Master Bai Zihan. I come on behalf of His Highness, the First Prince. He wishes to meet with you."

Bai Zihan didn't stop walking.

The emissary blinked and quickly stepped in front of him again.

"It's a personal invitation. The Prince said—"

"If he has something to ask of me," Bai Zihan interrupted without slowing, "then he should come to me himself."

The emissary stiffened, caught between fear and confusion.

"You—Young Master Bai, surely you understand that His Highness—"

"Well, everyone should know by now that those who are begging should be the ones going to the giver, rather than the other way around."

Bai Zihan said.

First Prince?

Merely a title of firstborn—with nothing backing it.

Bai Zihan wasn't afraid of the First Prince, or the possibility of revenge if he ever became Emperor.

The Emperor was still alive, and it might take quite some time before a new one was chosen.

Not to mention, after becoming Emperor, the First Prince's first priority would be to eliminate potential rivals and stabilize his position.

By the time he finishes all that, Bai Zihan was certain that he would be powerful enough that the Imperial Family would be just another clan he could deal with.

So, he wasn't afraid of offending the First Prince.

The emissary opened his mouth to respond—but no words came.

He wanted to curse and let Bai Zihan know the consequences of looking down on His Highness, but he'd received strict orders not to do anything rash or offend Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan was already walking away without even looking back.

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Before the First Prince, the emissary knelt, head lowered.

"So... he refused?"

The emissary nodded quickly.

"Y-Yes, Your Highness. He said that... if you have something to ask of him, then you should come to him."

Silence!

One of the Prince's advisors shifted nervously but said nothing.

After a long pause, the First Prince let out a soft chuckle.

"Interesting!"

He leaned back, swirling a cup of tea in his hand.

"He really is as the rumors say. Even this position of mine seemed insufficient to order him to come and see me."

The others in the room looked at one another, unsure whether that was a compliment or something else.

"I assume he won't come even if we send a more... formal summons?"

One of the advisors asked cautiously.

"He won't," the Prince said simply.

He already knew Bai Zihan's habit—that he never came when called, unless it was by his parents or sister.

And that if one wanted to meet him, they had to visit him personally.

Even so, he'd sent the emissary to test whether Bai Zihan would reject even his invitation.

It seemed he had.

Indeed, Bai Zihan didn't give face to anyone.

(Would he also reject the Emperor's order?)

He wondered—but he would have to wait a few more years to find out. When he became Emperor.

"Your Highness, what should we do then?"

Another advisor asked.

He was indirectly asking whether the First Prince would comply with Bai Zihan's demand and go meet him personally.

"I won't go. Let's focus on the other clans instead."

Yu Zidi knew it would be difficult to win over Bai Zihan, especially since he had no good bargaining chips to offer.

Rather than wasting time with Bai Zihan, he would focus on other powers he might be able to sway.

More than that, his pride wouldn't allow him to go meet a junior.

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One day has passed since the first round was over!

Bai Zihan didn't think much about the First Prince, his invitation, or the fact that he hadn't come personally to meet him.

He was more interested in spending the next three days doing absolutely nothing. Hard work was good and everything but nothing beats being lazy.

His sword was sheathed. His robe was loose. His body lay stretched on a jade recliner as a warm breeze drifted through the window.

He had just closed his eyes, content in the rare peace—

Knock! knock!

Bai Zihan's brow twitched.

He didn't move.

Knock knock knock.

This time, the knock was firmer. A moment passed—and then a voice followed.

"Young Master, it's urgent."

Kong Zhanghong said.

Bai Zihan opened one eye and let out a long sigh, as if the heavens themselves had betrayed him.

Well, heaven might have betrayed him a long time ago though.

"Enter!"

The door opened, and Kong Zhanghong stepped inside, his expression more serious than usual. He held a sealed jade slip in one hand.

"I've found it," he said without preamble. "A lead on the assassin's organization the young master told me to find."

That made Bai Zihan sit up.

He didn't expect that Kong Zhanghong could even track down the assassin group which the Bai Clan couldn't.

He took the jade slip with narrowed eyes.

"Where?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 231: Black Lantern Society[ 1,050 words ]

### *Chapter 231: Black Lantern Society*

Bai Zihan walked slowly, hands tucked into his sleeves, his long robe brushing lightly against the dirt.

Beside him, Kong Zhanghong kept pace, his expression grim, eyes occasionally scanning the rooftops and alleyways.

At the moment, they were on their way to the place Kong Zhanghong had found, which might be connected to the assassins sent to kill Bai Zihan, one year ago.

"Young Master, it might not be the organization that sent the assassins to kill you and Miss Bai Xinyue," Kong Zhanghong said quietly.

"Black Lantern Society operates mostly in the outer prefectures of the Capital—espionage, smuggling, contract killings. But they're not strong. They don't have the resources or cultivation to deploy several Soul Formation experts... much less Spirit Severing Realm cultivators."

Bai Zihan's gaze didn't waver.

"But?"

"They're definitely connected. I found out that Black Lantern Society has previously offended someone far higher than their level, and that clan wanted to eradicate the Black Lantern Society."

"But what happened next shocked everyone. The clan was destroyed the day after declaring war on Black Lantern Society. The group sent to wipe out that clan seemed to have strength similar to the one sent to kill you."

Kong Zhanghong continued.

"But this isn't the only evidence. Although the Black Lantern Society has the strength of a low-level sect, it is always helped by someone when in danger."

"Someone is definitely protecting them and funding them."

They passed beneath a narrow archway. The distant clanging of metal could be heard—a blacksmith working somewhere in the back alleys.

"Nobody knows who is backing the Black Lantern Society, but everyone knows that if one wants to deal with them, they have to prepare for what's to come. There aren't many organizations with such secrecy, and the assassins sent to kill you are also unknown."

"So I suspect that the Black Lantern Society is a branch of that organization or has some sort of relationship."

Bai Zihan listened carefully.

Although much of what Kong Zhanghong said was speculation, it wasn't baseless.

Moreover, to find such a hidden organization, he didn't expect to get concrete evidence or anything solid.

Anyway, even if it wasn't the same organization, such a powerful assassination group would definitely know another similar organization that might be the one he was looking for.

Kong Zhanghong's steps slowed as they neared the old teahouse, the shadows growing longer and thicker.

"I would have taken care of this myself," Kong Zhanghong said quietly, eyes narrowing.

"If it were just a matter of finding the organization, I could have tracked them to their roots. But my strength isn't enough."

He glanced at Bai Zihan, expression serious.

"Acting too openly might alert them. This organization moves in shadows, and if they sense a hunter breathing down their necks, they disappear like smoke. I didn't want to risk blowing our cover."

Bai Zihan gave a faint smile, though his gaze remained steady.

That sounded like an excuse, but Kong Zhanghong wasn't entirely wrong. Being cautious helps, especially when dealing with power one might not be familiar with.

Moreover, Kong Zhanghong had already done more than he expected.

They stood before the teahouse now. The faded wooden doors loomed ahead, silent as a tomb.

Kong Zhanghong hesitated before asking, "Young Master, will you call the elders for help? The Bai Clan's combined strength could overwhelm them."

Bai Zihan's eyes flicked toward the weathered building, then back to Kong Zhanghong.

"I can handle this myself!"

The words hung in the air.

Kong Zhanghong's brow furrowed sharply, startled by the confidence—and risk—in Bai Zihan's tone.

"Young Master... that is dangerous. They seem to have many Soul Formation Realm experts. And although I don't doubt your full strength, it's better to be cautious."

Kong Zhanghong warned.

This was one of the reasons he sought Bai Zihan's help—because the Black Lantern Society had several Soul Formation Realm cultivators.

But he hadn't expected Bai Zihan to plan to deal with them alone. He thought Bai Zihan would call the elders for help.

Bai Zihan's voice was calm but cold.

"Don't worry! If something happens, we can always run away. However, you can go back if you want."

Kong Zhanghong's eyes flickered with unease.

"Young Master is going. How can I just leave?"

He said confidently, but it was obvious he was scared.

He was only in the Nascent Soul Realm. Facing several Soul Formation experts... it wasn't something he could handle.

But of course, he can't show himself to be a coward and leave Bai Zihan by himself.

Kong Zhanghong took a deep breath and stepped forward, leading the way through the narrow alleys that twisted like veins through the old quarter of the Capital's outer prefectures.

The buildings here were worn down, cracked tiles and faded paint telling stories of neglect and silence.

The people who once lived nearby had long since moved out—or been moved out.

The stench of old blood, rusted iron, and stale incense clung to the air.

They finally reached a secluded courtyard enclosed by high stone walls mottled with moss.

At the far end stood a dilapidated structure—two stories high, with shuttered windows and a carved plaque above the door whose characters had long faded from view.

Kong Zhanghong came to a halt a few steps away, his body tense.

"This is it," he said quietly. "The old medicine guild's branch building. Abandoned for over ten years. No one goes near it. But according to the information I gathered... this is where Black Lantern Society is currently headquartered."

He swallowed hard. His knuckles were white as he clenched his fists.

Then, with a nervous glance toward Bai Zihan, he added, "Young Master, are you really sure we shouldn't wait for the elders? Even just one or two Spirit Severing cultivators would make all the difference. If we strike too early and they escape—"

He didn't get to finish.

Because Bai Zihan had already moved.

Without a word, he stepped forward, long robes flowing behind him, and headed straight for the heavy double doors of the building.

Kong Zhanghong's mouth opened in alarm.

"Young Master—!"

But Bai Zihan didn't slow.

Kong Zhanghong cursed softly under his breath.

He jogged forward, heart pounding, and followed Bai Zihan in.

"Wait for me, Young Master!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 232: Bai Zihan Walks In[ 1,516 words ]

### *Chapter 232: Bai Zihan Walks In*

Inside, the air was thick with dust and darkness.

Bai Zihan stepped casually into the building said to be the Black Lantern Society's headquarters, his hands still tucked in his sleeves, his eyes calm.

The space was dimly lit by flickering oil lamps mounted on the cracked walls, casting dancing shadows that made the old wooden beams creak like something alive.

The floor was scuffed, bloodstained in places, and the scent of dried herbs barely masked the iron tang that clung to the room.

There were people inside.

A dozen men and women in black clothes and veils lounged around low tables, some sharpening blades, others drinking tea.

But the moment the door creaked open behind Bai Zihan, every head turned.

Weapons slid from sleeves. Killing intent flickered like lightning in their eyes.

"Who are you?"

One of them barked, stepping forward, hand already on the hilt of a curved dagger. His voice was hoarse, and a long scar ran down his cheek.

Another, a tall man leaning against a wooden pillar, narrowed his eyes.

"You picked the wrong place to wander into, boy. Turn around and you might leave with your legs."

None of them recognized him—yet. Not in this dim light.

Kong Zhanghong entered right behind him, his face pale, sweat on his brow.

His eyes darted around the room, locking briefly onto a pair of Soul Formation auras lurking in the back.

There were also several Nascent Soul Realms, each reeking of blood.

But Bai Zihan didn't even glance at them.

He took a step forward. Then another.

His tone was soft—barely more than a murmur—but every person in the room heard him clearly.

"I'm here for a conversation."

The tension in the room twisted tighter, like a bowstring pulled to its limit.

The scar-faced man laughed.

"A conversation? With whom, exactly?"

He still considered Bai Zihan just a young boy who didn't know where he was.

Bai Zihan stopped in the center of the room.

"Whoever's in charge."

The laughter died down—because their leader, even the most prominent member of the Black Lantern Society, couldn't be met casually.

A man seated near the corner froze, squinting hard through the flickering light. He leaned forward, his breath catching.

Then his eyes widened in disbelief.

"...That's... That's Bai Zihan! I must quickly inform the leader."

He immediately stood up and nearly stumbled over his chair in his haste.

Without a word, he turned and rushed toward the back corridor, vanishing through a door behind a beaded curtain.

He was going to report to the leader.

Kong Zhanghong's heart pounded. This was it.

They were inside the den. And the wolves were stirring.

But Bai Zihan's expression hadn't changed.

"Do you even know where you are?"

The scar-faced man asked.

Bai Zihan turned his head slightly, meeting the man's gaze with a calm, steady look.

"Yes," he said softly. "Isn't this the Black Lantern Society's headquarters?"

The silence that followed was not the silence of confusion, but one of dawning realization—and alarm.

Eyes widened.

The tension doubled.

This wasn't some lost noble's son who had wandered into the wrong teahouse.

He knew exactly where he was.

He had come here.

On purpose!

The scar-faced man from earlier sucked in a sharp breath, his posture tightening.

The tall man by the pillar now stood fully upright, both hands at the ready, his gaze flicking toward the beaded curtain the informant had disappeared behind.

One of the veiled women subtly shifted her position to block the nearest exit.

"How do you know about this place?"

A cold, harsh voice demanded from the corner.

Another man stepped forward—this one older, broader, with a jagged sword strapped to his back.

His spiritual aura flickered faintly, not yet released, but unmistakably Soul Formation Realm.

"No one knows this place unless we allow them to know," the man said slowly. "So either you're lying... or someone told you. And either way—"

He took another step forward, eyes narrowing.

"—You're not leaving this place today."

Kong Zhanghong swallowed hard. He could feel the pressure rising in the room, like a dam seconds before bursting.

But Bai Zihan remained completely still.

His hands were still tucked in his sleeves. His posture relaxed. Almost lazy.

"Whether I leave or not," Bai Zihan replied, "depends on whether your leader is willing to come out and talk."

The veiled woman laughed sharply.

"You still think you're in a position to ask questions?"

She asked.

"Yes!"

Bai Zihan replied.

"F\*\*K it! I'm going to break every bone in your limbs, and then I'll ask you again—who told you."

The scar-faced said.

That was the signal.

Half a dozen shadows surged forward in a coordinated motion—blades flashing, talismans igniting mid-air, dark smoke twisting like snakes.

Killing intent crashed toward Bai Zihan from all sides.

Bai Zihan didn't flinch.

Not when blades gleamed in the shadows, not when talismans ignited with ghostly green light, not even when killing intent surged like a crashing wave.

Instead, he let out a soft breath.

And moved.

Whoosh!

Before anyone could react, Bai Zihan was already among them.

A flick of his sleeve, and the veiled woman slammed into the wall with a choking gasp—blood spraying from her mouth as her dantian cracked.

"Argh!"

"W-What? What happened?"

"Where is he?"

The Nascent Soul Realm cultivators couldn't even see Bai Zihan's figure and were confused by his sudden appearance and disappearance.

"There!"

The scar-faced man pointed his finger toward Bai Zihan as he made his own move toward him.

But, a step forward, and the scar-faced man's curved dagger shattered in his hand before he screamed, his wrist twisted backward at an unnatural angle.

"Ahhhhh! How is this possible!"

The scar-faced man was confused as his beloved Profound-Grade dagger was completely destroyed by Bai Zihan's sword.

Not to mention, he, a Soul Formation Realm expert, was easily defeated like this by someone whose hair isn't even fully grown.

Another flick—this time of two fingers—and the tall man by the pillar flew backward, crashing through two tables and groaning as he lay sprawled in the wreckage.

It was effortless. Clinical. Precise.

The room devolved into chaos.

Two more assassins—both Nascent Soul cultivators—lunged in from opposite angles, one wielding a chain whip and the other a crescent-shaped glaive.

Bai Zihan didn't even turn his head.

His fingers brushed the air.

Crack!

The chain shattered into links. The glaive snapped in half mid-swing.

Before either attacker could comprehend what had happened, they were hurled backward by a formless wave of force—crashing hard, ribs shattering.

"Stop—!"

One of the Soul Formation cultivators at the back shouted, his face pale.

"He's Mid Soul Formation at least—no, perhaps High Soul Formation Realm! We need to work together!"

The other Soul Formation expert cursed.

"He doesn't even look twenty—what kind of monster cultivator is this?!"

The broad man with the jagged sword finally drew his weapon, face grim.

"Don't hold back. Move as if to kill him!"

His sword flared with dark-red spiritual Qi as he stepped forward, aura rising like a tide.

The second Soul Formation cultivator followed, lightning wreathing his palms.

They moved together—synchronized and deadly.

But just before they could strike—

A voice rang out.

"Stop!"

It wasn't loud, but it cut through the chaos like a blade.

Instantly, everyone froze.

Even the two Soul Formation experts halted mid-step, their expressions twisting in hesitation.

From behind the beaded curtain, a figure emerged.

She was dressed in plain, midnight robes embroidered with silver threads, her long hair tied back with a bone clasp.

Her presence was quiet, but oppressive—a still mountain at midnight.

Her eyes were narrow, pitch-black, like twin abysses that saw through everything.

She looked at Bai Zihan. Then at the injured assassins littering the floor.

Then back to Bai Zihan again.

She hadn't expected that in the little time it took to get here, so many of her assassins would be lying on the ground including Soul Formation Realm cultivator.

This was a disgrace to the Black Lantern Society—but also a sign of just how powerful Bai Zihan actually was.

There was no longer any need to debate. The person before her was the famous Bai Zihan.

"You're Bai Zihan," she said, her voice low and smooth. "Heir of the Bai Clan. What are you doing here?"

Bai Zihan inclined his head, hands still calmly folded in his sleeves.

"You must be the leader of the Black Lantern Society."

"I am!"

She walked forward slowly, without fear, but not with arrogance either. Just the deliberate pace of someone used to being in control.

"My name is Xie Wanshou."

She stopped a few paces away from Bai Zihan, meeting his gaze directly.

"I take it this visit of yours... is not random?"

Bai Zihan's lips curved faintly.

"No. I have questions. About the assassin who tried to kill me and Bai Xinyue a year ago."

Xie Wanshou's eyes narrowed slightly.

"And you think we were responsible?"

"Perhaps. Even if not," Bai Zihan said softly, "I think your organization knows who it was."

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 233: Like Trash on the Floor[ 1,020 words ]

### *Chapter 233: Like Trash on the Floor*

The room was still.

Blood painted the floor. Broken tables groaned under the weight of fallen assassins, and the air reeked of burnt talismans and shattered pride.

Among the debris, the scar-faced man slowly rose to his knees, one hand clutching his mangled wrist, his face pale with pain.

His eyes were fixed on Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan!

The name echoed in his mind like thunder.

He had heard the stories, of course. Everyone had.

He had scoffed at those stories like many others.

Exaggeration, he'd thought.

Typical noble propaganda. Just another overhyped brat from a powerful clan, with resources and elders cleaning up after him.

But now—

Now he could still feel the pain in his broken bones, the fear that gripped his lungs, and the cold sweat soaking his back.

He clenched his teeth, humiliated.

He had ganged up on him. With others. Nascent Soul. Soul Formation. Veterans. Killers.

And still, they had been played with like insects.

His eyes trembled as he looked up again.

Bai Zihan stood there as if nothing had happened.

As if this place—this den of assassins—was no more threatening to him than a teahouse.

His sleeves remained immaculate. His expression was calm, detached and eerily cold.

This is the monster the rumors spoke of.

No—worse.

The rumors hadn't done him justice.

The scar-faced man felt a bitter laugh rise in his throat, only to choke it down.

He had thought himself strong. Elite. A reaper in the dark.

But before Bai Zihan, he was no more than a pebble in the path.

He lowered his head, blood trickling from his lip as he spat to the side.

So this... is true fear.

And a part of him—despite the pain, despite the fury—understood why even the Soul Formation cultivators had been stopped by their leader.

It wasn't for Bai Zihan's sake.

It was for theirs.

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Xie Wanshou's eyes flickered—just for an instant.

A subtle shift in her pupils, a slight stillness in her breathing.

But to someone like Bai Zihan, that brief falter was enough.

She knew something.

Still, she composed herself quickly, her voice smooth as ever.

"You give us too much credit," she said evenly.

"The Black Lantern Society takes many contracts—but we do not act without cause or coin. And we certainly don't go after the Heirs of the great clans, not to mention someone as great as the Bai Clan."

She paused.

"I do not recall any such contract. Neither against you, nor against Bai Xinyue."

She tried to explain.

"Certainly! But like I said, you definitely know the one behind it. You'd better cough it up, otherwise even those two dogs hiding behind you won't be able to save you."

Xie Wanshou's composure cracked.

Bai Zihan's words had struck home.

Not just because of their confidence—but because they were correct.

The temperature in the room shifted.

"Two dogs... hiding behind you," Bai Zihan repeated, almost lazily. His tone held no mockery, only cold truth.

"Spirit Severing Realm, yes? Probably your source of confidence."

He tilted his head slightly, eyes flicking toward the dark corridor behind the curtain Xie had emerged from.

His spiritual sense had already pierced through the layers of illusion and Qi-concealing formations.

Two shadows lurked there—one leaning against a pillar with arms crossed, the other seated in silence like a statue carved from stone.

They had likely been watching and waiting, either for a signal from Xie Wanshou or a sign that she was in danger.

Xie's pupils shrank ever so slightly.

(He noticed?)

Before she could respond, the shadows stirred.

A voice echoed from the darkness.

"Hah... Back off, Wanshou. This little cub isn't as harmless as he looks."

The first figure stepped forward, revealing a tall man with unkempt silver-streaked hair and an amused glint in his eyes.

His clothes were simple but reinforced with formation, and a long saber was strapped to his back.

He cracked his neck as he stepped beside Xie Wanshou.

The second shadow emerged more slowly.

This one was quieter, taller, and wore a half-mask made of jade, hiding the lower part of his face.

His robes were pitch-black, adorned only with a red thread around the collar.

An icy pressure rolled through the air.

Spirit Severing Realm!

Both of them.

"You've got sharp eyes, boy," the jade-masked man said, his voice deep and steady. "But I suggest you go back. Otherwise, even if you are from the Bai Clan, I won't show mercy."

"Make your choice—comply or not. Spare me the useless chatter."

Bai Zihan replied.

The silver-haired one laughed, clearly enjoying himself.

"Hahaha... Seems like the Bai Clan has raised a very arrogant heir. Typical of them!"

He took a step forward.

The wooden floor groaned beneath his feet—not from weight, but from the pressure that radiated outward.

The very structure of the building seemed to tense in response.

"I've been in the Spirit Severing Realm for sixty years. Killed Void Refinement enemies before you even had your first breakthrough. Do you really think you can walk in here, threaten the Black Lantern Society's Mistress, and walk away untouched?"

Beside him, the jade-masked cultivator finally raised a hand—and the walls of the building groaned.

A formation had been activated, sealing the exit to make sure Bai Zihan couldn't escape.

Kong Zhanghong, by now, was already regretting coming.

(Two Spirit Severing Realms!!! Young Master, we need to get out of here!)

He was surprised by Bai Zihan's earlier dominance, but that and this were different—because unlike before, now they were facing Spirit Severing Realm cultivators.

But unlike his concern and rising panic, Bai Zihan remained calm. Unmoving.

He showed no sign of retreat.

Bai Zihan exhaled softly.

His voice—though still quiet—now held the resonance of a blade being drawn.

"I see... so you want to defy me."

"Big words!"

The silver-haired one snapped.

"Hmph! Don't think we're the same as these trash. You'll regret ever stepping in here!"

"Well, I don't know about that. Because when this is over, you two will also be lying on the floor—just like them."

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

*Chapter 234: Battle Between Spirit Severing Realms!*

Everyone was baffled by Bai Zihan's confidence—or rather, his overconfidence.

Perhaps it was the first time anyone had met someone this arrogant while standing at death's door.

The silver-haired man sneered.

"Still bluffing?"

He took a step forward, vanishing with a burst of wind.

Whoosh!

His movement was sharp, honed through decades of combat.

His saber left its scabbard with a shriek, trailing light. In that instant, the room seemed to bend under the force of his advance.

"One strike," he said coldly. "That's all it'll take!"

Bai Zihan didn't move.

He simply watched.

The air cracked—the saber split the room in half as it came for him.

Kong Zhanghong cried out, flinching.

"Young Master!"

But just before the strike landed—

CLANG!

The ringing of metal echoed like a tolling bell.

Sparks exploded.

The silver-haired cultivator's expression shifted from smug certainty to stunned disbelief.

His blade had stopped.

No—been caught.

Bai Zihan's right hand had snapped upward and caught the saber with his hand.

Barehanded!

The floor beneath him cracked from the rebound of force. Wind howled around his robes.

And yet—he stood unshaken.

Eyes cold. Fingers tight. Blade trembling.

"What?"

The silver-haired man muttered, unable to comprehend what had just happened.

Before he could pull back—

BOOM!

A pulse of power erupted from Bai Zihan's body.

Spiritual Qi surged in every direction, the floor beneath him breaking in a perfect circle.

The entire room lurched as if struck by a tidal wave of Qi.

The air froze.

Kong Zhanghong stumbled back, mouth agape.

Xie Wanshou's pupils shrank.

The jade-masked cultivator's brow finally furrowed.

The silver-haired man?

He was sent flying.

Like a meteor, he crashed through the far wall with a thunderous boom, his body carving a trench into the floor as he skidded and rolled—only stopping when he hit a pillar with a bone-crunching sound.

Blood sprayed from his mouth.

Silence followed.

Only the creaking of wood and the soft hiss of displaced air remained.

Bai Zihan slowly withdrew his hand while looking disgusted at the blood he got on his hand.

He exhaled.

And with that exhale—

His true cultivation leaked out.

A tide of pressure descended.

The illusion was gone.

There was no longer any doubt.

Spirit Severing Realm!

He wasn't just a Soul Formation cultivator, as many had thought.

The jade-masked man didn't speak.

His gaze locked onto Bai Zihan like a hawk—cautious now, no longer dismissive.

Xie Wanshou's face finally changed.

Even she hadn't expected this.

(He is in the Spirit Severing Realm... How is this possible?)

She knew many secrets and info throughout the Desolate Heaven Empire—including the top geniuses.

Even those favored to win in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition were only in the Soul Formation Realm.

But Bai Zihan?

He was on another level entirely.

Those rumors that Bai Zihan was scared to participate in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition?

Complete bullshit!

With this level of cultivation, he had no need to fear anyone.

(No wonder they paid so much to kill him.)

The walls around them groaned under the pressure.

And still—Bai Zihan hadn't taken a single step.

He looked toward the jade-masked cultivator now.

Expression cold.

Voice calm.

"Next!"

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"Damn it!"

The jade-masked man's voice was low.

His hand curled into a fist as his Qi subtly rose.

He wasn't going to act like the earlier person—he wasn't underestimate Bai Zihan, not after his display of strength.

He had no intention of charging in blindly .

Instead, he turned slightly, calling out toward the collapsed silver-haired cultivator still twitching among the rubble.

"Shan, get up!"

His tone was cold and clipped.

"We're doing this together."

From within the debris, a grunt of pain emerged.

The silver-haired cultivator—Shan—staggered to his feet, blood dripping from his mouth, one arm trembling.

His robes were in tatters, hair disheveled, pride in ruins.

But he didn't hesitate.

He forced himself upright, wiping the blood from his chin. His eyes burned—not just with pain, but with the need to salvage his dignity.

"He got lucky!"

His voice was hoarse. Then louder, to the room:

"Don't think I'll fall for that twice!"

He roared as if to shatter the memory of his earlier defeat. His spiritual Qi surged again—wilder now, edged with fury.

The floor cracked beneath his feet as he jumped, returning to stand beside the jade-masked man.

The room shifted again. Tension thickened.

Two Spirit Severing Realm cultivators now stood side by side—battle-hardened, experienced, cautious.

Their arrogance had burned away.

Now?

Only killing intent remained.

Shan rolled his shoulder, flexing his spiritual Qi, gaze locked on Bai Zihan.

"You really tricked me there, but your luck has run out now!"

He pointed his saber at him.

Bai Zihan couldn't help but laugh.

This guy—Shan charged in by himself, got humiliated, and now thought he could get his revenge?

The jade-masked cultivator raised a single hand, drawing forth a strange silver formation disc from his robe.

It floated in the air between his palms—rotating slowly, humming with layered inscriptions.

The pressure spiked.

Spiritual Qi from three Spirit Severing Realm cultivators surged through the ruined chamber, cracking walls and rattling lanterns.

Dust rained from the ceiling. The air felt heavy—like the sky before a thunderstorm.

Boom!

Bai Zihan vanished.

In a blink, he was there—right between them. Blade in motion, feet light, body graceful.

Like a dance.

Except each step could kill.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Sparks flew as Shan's saber met the Eternal Spirit Sword. The impact forced him back again and again, each clash biting deeper into his defense.

Bai Zihan's strength was overwhelming—unlike anything they had faced.

Then—an arc of light!

The jade-masked man barely blocked it—only to find three more strikes already following, like a flowing current.

(What is this technique?)

The silver-haired man roared and swung wide, aiming to catch Bai Zihan off-guard—

Fwoosh!

But his strike hit nothing but the afterimage.

One Bai Zihan became three.

Three became five.

The five became nine.

Each one shimmering, flickering, flowing like moonlight reflected in running water.

The Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword.

"What the hell!?"

Shan slashed at a shadow—it vanished.

The jade-masked man unleashed a barrage of talismans and spirit chains.

Bai Zihan didn't even dodge.

He shifted his stance.

And then—his sword swept in a circular arc, gentle as a breeze.

The chains and attacks were deflected, scattered like raindrops against a still lake.

Eternal Flowing Water Sword Technique.

Smooth. Soft. Untouchable.

Every technique they threw at him was rendered useless.

No matter the power.

No matter the speed.

The silver-haired man snarled.

"Fight like a man!"

Bai Zihan chuckled, casually spinning his blade as the afterimages reformed around him.

He sidestepped another thrust from the jade-masked cultivator and flicked his sword—one, two, three times.

Then, he turned his back.

In the middle of a fight.

Hands behind his back.

"I've seen enough."

His voice was quiet.

"Spirit Severing Realm... not as overwhelming as I thought."

The jade-masked man's eyes widened.

"You—"

"I needed to see how much I've improved," Bai Zihan interrupted, still not looking at them. "You two served your purpose well."

He finally looked over his shoulder, golden eyes gleaming beneath his tousled hair.

"Now let's end this before you drag someone else into the fight and make it boring."

The nine afterimages suddenly aligned.

A flash of gold and silver light gathered at Bai Zihan's blade as he raised it overhead—still one-handed, still composed.

The jade-masked man's instincts screamed at him to run.

But it was too late.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light—Third Form."

His voice echoed.

The light flared.

Then—

WHOOSH!

A single stroke.

Too fast to see.

Too silent to hear.

But the aftermath was impossible to ignore.

A perfect arc cut through the battlefield. Wind screamed as the energy passed, tearing through formation defenses, warping the walls, and slamming both Shan and the jade-masked man backward as if heaven itself had pushed them.

BOOM!

They crashed into the far wall—bloodied and unconscious.

The arc continued, slicing clean through the far barrier and out into the night sky, leaving behind a glowing scar in the earth that shimmered for several seconds before vanishing.

Silence!

Bai Zihan exhaled once more and sheathed his sword.

The pressure disappeared.

The shattered remains of the room trembled around him.

He looked at the mess, then at the unconscious enemies.

"Too fragile!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 235: The Price of a Head[ 1,597 words ]

### *Chapter 235: The Price of a Head*

(Impossible!)

Xie Wanshou's heart pounded in her chest.

She stood frozen, her thoughts scattered. Every breath she took felt heavy under the lingering pressure Bai Zihan had just released.

Her gaze flicked toward the two crumpled bodies embedded in the far wall—two Spirit Severing cultivators crushed as easily as dry leaves.

(He... he defeated both of them...)

Cold sweat ran down her back.

Her instincts screamed at her—run. Now!

She began to step back, subtly channeling Qi to her legs, ready to vanish in a blink.

But then—

Bai Zihan turned his gaze on her.

His eyes were calm.

Like someone who had already calculated every possible outcome—and dismissed all but one.

"I wouldn't try that if I were you."

A clear warning.

Xie Wanshou's entire body went rigid.

A ripple of killing intent brushed past her skin like a blade, invisible and cold.

She knew.

With Bai Zihan's speed—his strength—she wouldn't make it past the door. No, she wouldn't make it halfway through the room.

The moment she moved—

She'd be down.

Or dead.

Trying to run away was tantamount to inviting more trouble to herself.

Her fingers, already halfway through a hand seal, twitched—then stopped.

She clenched her jaw, her eyes burning with frustration—but she didn't move again.

A slow smirk tugged at the corner of Bai Zihan's lips.

"Wise choice!"

He stepped forward, his shoe crunching lightly on the cracked floor, and looked around the room—what was left of it.

Splintered beams. Collapsed pillars. Shattered lanterns.

His gaze finally returned to her.

"Now then, I would like to ask you the same thing, and this time, I hope there won't be any lies!"

There was a glint of killing intent, suggesting death the moment she tried to make an excuse or lie.

Xie Wanshou flipped and nodded vigorously.

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The luxurious elegance of Xie Wanshou's personal office now felt more like a prison than a place of power.

At her own desk, Bai Zihan sat with one leg crossed casually over the other, a porcelain teacup untouched in his hand.

He didn't speak.

He didn't need to.

His gaze alone demanded answers.

Xie Wanshou stood before him, not even daring to lift her eyes fully.

Behind her, in the far corner, the two Spirit Severing Realm cultivators remained unconscious—bodies slumped awkwardly against the wall like discarded puppets.

Kong Zhanghong stood a short distance away, half in awe, half in reverence. His eyes hadn't left Bai Zihan since the moment he beat down the Spirit Severing Realm.

To him, it was as if a deity had descended and chosen to wear the skin of a mortal.

He felt stupid for ever doubting Bai Zihan.

"Earlier, what I said is true. We, the Black Lantern Society, weren't the ones who sent the assassination, and as you can see, we don't have the power to do so either."

Xie Wanshou began, first trying to diffuse the situation to portray that she wasn't his enemy.

"And if you ask me whether I know who sent the assassins to kill you, then I must also disappoint you as well. I don't know very well!"

Xie Wanshou declared.

Bai Zihan saw no lies in her words, but that of course wasn't enough to convince him.

He already saw signs of Xie Wanshou knowing something regarding the ones who sent the assassins.

But still, he didn't say anything and waited for Xie Wanshou to speak.

And if the answer doesn't satisfy him, then he can only apologize for what is about to happen next.

Xie Wanshou's lips trembled slightly—not from fear, but from the unbearable weight of the silence pressing down on her.

She knew that this answer didn't satisfy Bai Zihan at all.

Bai Zihan's gaze was calm, but within that calm lay the same kind of stillness that preceded a thunderstorm.

She swallowed.

"However, there... is something that I do know."

She continued, slower now, measuring every word.

"A year ago, I was invited to the headquarters of a certain organization. Not part of the Black Lantern Society, but one... far more dangerous. They might not even be based in the Desolate Heaven Empire."

She took a breath.

"I don't know what they truly call themselves. But while I was there, I saw something."

Xie Wanshou didn't look at him, as if speaking the memory aloud was already difficult enough.

"There was a wall. Covered in bounty scrolls and mission edicts. Names of cultivators, sect leaders, rogue geniuses... all with prices on their heads. And one of the targets was... yours."

A long pause.

"You were listed as an S-Class Target. With a bounty offering Heaven-Grade artifacts... and hundreds of thousands of gold pieces."

Even Kong Zhanghong gasped.

One could say that for someone like Bai Zihan, the price was too high.

But of course, that is if one is just considering his current strength.

Otherwise, looking at his background and potential, then it was very well a good price for Bai Zihan's head.

But one might even need to consider just who would be able to give away even a Heaven-Grade Artifact for the head of a junior?

It definitely wasn't someone from the Desolate Heaven Empire, as even the Li-Zhao Clan wouldn't be able to casually take out a Heaven-Grade Artifact just to kill a junior.

Perhaps if the target was Bai Tianheng—but definitely not Bai Zihan.

They still don't think that he was at that level of threat.

Bai Zihan remained still.

(Heaven-Grade Artifact for my head?)

Who would be willing to pay this much? And who can pay this much?

(Demonic Sect?)

They would have done it themselves instead of hiring assassins.

(Then who?)

Currently, he can't say for sure who would have offered such a generous reward for his head.

But he didn't need to.

He can always go and ask the one who took the commission who their commissioners were—just like now.

Xie Wanshou forced herself to continue.

"Apart from that, I truly don't know anything."

Xie Wanshou emphasized.

Bai Zihan finally spoke.

"And yet you still say you don't know who they are?"

Xie Wanshou shook her head quickly.

"That's the truth. They're... extremely secretive. I only know what I've seen. I only know that they are very powerful and even have Void Refinement Realm cultivators working for them."

She exhaled, voice strained.

"After hearing about the recent assassins sent for you... I connected the dots. It might be them. But I can't say for certain. It could also be another organization capitalizing on the bounty."

Silence returned, cold and oppressive.

Bai Zihan sat back slightly in the chair. He tilted the porcelain cup once, watching the tea ripple, then finally set it down.

Indeed, even if there was a bounty for him, it wasn't certain that it would be them who sent the assassins.

There are many assassin organizations who would more than welcome such a bounty with hefty rewards.

"Do you know where that organization is located?"

Xie Wanshou shook her head.

"I was taken away with all senses blocked until I reached their organization. That is also done for others who want to go to their organization as well. It seems only their members know the exact location."

It would be easy if she knew the location, but it looks like this mysterious organization is really good at hiding.

Bai Zihan's voice was calm, but beneath it was the subtle bite of interrogation.

"Then let me ask you this..."

He leaned forward, his gaze locking with hers.

"Is that the same organization that's been helping the Black Lantern Society from the shadows? Like when a mid-tier clan that was about to declare war on you was suddenly... wiped out?"

Xie Wanshou's eyes flickered.

There was no point denying it.

"Yes," she admitted. "It was them!"

Her voice was bitter, quiet.

"The two Spirit Severing Realm cultivators you saw earlier... they weren't part of the Black Lantern Society either. They were sent by that organization. Either to protect me... or to watch me."

A bitter laugh escaped her lips, low and mocking—at herself or the situation, even she wasn't sure.

Bai Zihan frowned.

"That doesn't make sense. Why would such a powerful force bother helping a minor organization like yours? Especially when you claim there's no affiliation between you."

Xie Wanshou's lips pressed into a thin line. She hesitated—just a breath—before answering.

"...Because the young master of that organization has taken a fancy to me."

Her expression was complicated—half disdain, half exhaustion.

"I don't know exactly who he is. Only that he's the son of someone important. Maybe even one of their high elders. He's young... arrogant... dangerous. And unfortunately, infatuated."

She looked away, voice colder now.

"Ever since that first meeting, he's sent help whenever I was in danger. Eliminated threats. Cleared obstacles. But never asked for anything directly in return. Not yet."

Her jaw tightened.

"I never agreed to anything. I never made any deal. But it's clear he expects something eventually."

Bai Zihan didn't respond immediately. He studied her—the curl of disdain at her mouth, the tension in her shoulders. She clearly didn't welcome the attention.

But that didn't matter to him.

He wasn't here to sympathize.

What did matter was that the organization behind his assassination is interested in the woman before him—and that information, he might be able to make full use of.

Bai Zihan sat back slowly.

"Interesting!"

His tone was neutral, but the air around him had grown sharper—colder.

"Looks like you have your use after all!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 236: Tearing Out the Answer [ 1,264 words ]

### *Chapter 236: Tearing Out the Answer*

Since Xie Wanshou seemed to have captured the heart of one of the prominent figures of the mysterious organization, she could be used as bait to lure them out.

He didn't believe that the man who had spent so much to win her heart would do nothing once he found out that Xie Wanshou had fallen into his hands.

Moreover, there was another way for him to learn where this mysterious organization was located.

The two Spirit Severing Realm cultivators who had been unconscious until now.

Bai Zihan's gaze shifted to Kong Zhanghong.

"Wake them!"

Kong Zhanghong didn't dare delay.

He crouched beside the two unconscious Spirit Severing cultivators and barked,

"Wake up! You hear me? Wake up! Young Master wants you two now!"

Well, it didn't matter that Bai Zihan had business with them if they were still unconscious.

SLAP!

When there was no response, he slapped one sharply across the face—then the other.

SLAP! SLAP!

Even after several slaps, there was still nothing.

"Tsk!"

Clicking his tongue in frustration, he rushed to the corner, grabbed a wooden bucket of water, and hurried back.

Without ceremony, he poured it over their faces in heavy, splashing bursts.

Still no reaction.

Xie Wanshou watched with pity as Kong Zhanghong treated the two Spirit Severing cultivators as if they were ordinary criminals, while Bai Zihan observed with amusement.

He didn't mind what Kong Zhanghong did to wake them and found it interesting to see whether he would truly succeed with his method.

After all, a Spirit Severing Realm body was quite tough, and normal methods might not be effective on them.

But he was willing to wait, as he didn't necessarily have anything else to do.

After several more slaps and harsh shouts, their eyelids finally fluttered open.

At last, after much hard work, Kong Zhanghong managed to wake the two of them up.

"Argh! What happened?"

They groaned in pain, feeling the sting on their faces as if slapped, and then became aware of their drenched, dripping state.

Moments later, the other one also stirred—eyes blinking open, faces clouded in confusion before memory returned.

Their gazes darted to the far wall, to the splintered wood and broken stone where they'd been embedded. Then to the figure seated at the desk.

Recognition struck.

They stiffened.

"You..." one began, but his voice caught, as if the rest of the words refused to come.

"Finally come to your senses?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"How could you defeat two of us? This must be a nightmare!"

Shan couldn't believe it despite everything happening before him.

How could they accept that a youth, more than a century younger than them, had defeated them effortlessly despite being outnumbered?

There was no way they could.

"I don't care whether you believe this is reality or a nightmare. Just answer me this honestly," Bai Zihan continued.

"Where is your organization located?"

The room fell silent.

The two exchanged a glance, and slowly... a sneer crept across their lips.

"I don't know what kind of trick you used. But there is no way we would tell—"

They didn't finish.

A sound like a muffled crack echoed through the office.

The first cultivator's face went white, veins bulging on his forehead.

His breath turned ragged as Bai Zihan's Qi slammed into his meridians, forcing its way through every channel, every vein, like molten metal poured into fragile glass.

He gasped—a sharp, guttural sound—as the pain exploded outward, radiating from his core to every limb.

The second cultivator surged forward instinctively, but a single glance from Bai Zihan froze him mid-motion.

The calm voice came again.

"I'll ask again. Where?"

The second one laughed—a strained, breathless sound.

"You... think pain will—"

Bai Zihan's right hand twitched. The cultivator's dantian shattered with a crisp, almost delicate snap.

"AHHHHH!"

A scream tore through the office.

Bai Zihan didn't even blink. He simply watched.

He turned his gaze to the first one again.

"You next!"

The first cultivator's lips trembled—not from fear alone, but from the unbearable force of Qi still flooding his system, overloading it until it felt like his meridians would explode.

Every second stretched into eternity.

His body arched involuntarily, sweat soaking his robes, but still—still—he glared at Bai Zihan.

"You... won't... get... anything... from us..."

Bai Zihan's smirk was almost imperceptible.

"Good!"

His Qi surged again, this time compressing violently inside the man's core, each pulse like a hammer shattering stone from the inside out.

The cultivator's scream went hoarse, breaking into ragged gasps.

Still, despite the agony, neither man spoke.

Suddenly, both cultivators' jaws twitched—subtle, but enough to catch Bai Zihan's notice.

A faint grinding sound followed.

Poison!

Of course.

Almost every trained assassin or loyalist from a shadow organization carried a capsule hidden between their molars, ready to end their life the moment capture became inevitable.

But Bai Zihan had been expecting exactly this.

Before either could bite down, his figure blurred.

Two sharp, bone-crunching CRACKS echoed in the room as his fists smashed into their jaws with surgical precision.

"AHHHHHH!"

Teeth shattered, fragments and blood spraying from their mouths.

The poison capsules clinked harmlessly against the floorboards.

Both men gasped in agony, one clutching at his jaw, the other spitting out blood and broken enamel.

Their eyes were wide—not just from the pain, but from the realization that their final escape had been ripped away.

Bai Zihan straightened slowly, shaking the crimson droplets from his knuckles as if the effort had been nothing.

"Did you think I wouldn't know?"

His voice was calm, almost casual—but beneath it, a cold certainty lingered, the promise of what came next.

"You won't be dying so easily until I get my answers."

Their fate was already decided.

What awaited them now... was not death.

It was something far worse.

The room filled with the ragged, guttural wails of the two Spirit Severing cultivators.

Their bodies jerked and spasmed under the crushing weight of Bai Zihan's Qi, sweat pouring from their brows, their eyes bloodshot and wild.

Yet... still, they said nothing.

Truly loyal.

Or so it seemed.

Bai Zihan's gaze hardened. He didn't believe it—how could mere assassins be so loyal to their organization?

He wanted to torture them more, but if he pressed further, their bodies would collapse long before their will did.

And then... they'd be useless to him.

With a slow exhale, he withdrew his Qi—just enough for them to slump forward, coughing and wheezing, their pain momentarily dulled.

He shut his eyes briefly.

Time to use another card.

"Senior," he called inwardly. "Wake up!"

A faint ripple echoed in the depths of his consciousness, like an ancient beast stirring from slumber.

"What is it?"

Immortal Emperor Feilian's voice asked.

"I need the location of their organization. These two refuse to speak, no matter what I do. Do you have a method to open their mouths?"

A pause. Then came a low hum of thought.

"Hmph... if they won't speak, their memories will. Soul Search will give you what you want."

Bai Zihan's eyes opened slightly. Indeed, that would be great.

"However, there are side effect. If done cleanly—none. But if something goes wrong..."

"...their minds will be torn apart. They'll either die instantly or become drooling husks for the rest of their miserable lives."

Bai Zihan's lips curled faintly.

"I don't care about their lives."

"Then it's simple!"

"Can you perform it?"

"Hmph! Just two Spirit Severing Realm cultivators. Not a problem even in this state!"

Bai Zihan's gaze turned back to the two cultivators.

"Then... let's begin!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 237: Soul Search! [ 1,103 words ]

### *Chapter 237: Soul Search!*

Bai Zihan's eyes grew cold, a stillness settling over him that made even the air in the room seem to hesitate.

The two cultivators, already pale and shaking, stiffened further as he raised his hand—fingers curling into a claw-like shape.

Kong Zhanghong, standing a few steps away, felt his back dampen with cold sweat.

He didn't know what this was, but every instinct screamed at him to stay silent and not move a muscle.

Xie Wanshou's gaze sharpened.

That gesture...

Her heart skipped.

Soul Searching!

She had heard of it before—a brutal art that invaded a cultivator’s mind to seize memories by force. No lies, no resistance. Everything laid bare.

But there was something wrong.

"How can he do Soul Search on them?"

The requirement for Soul Searching wasn’t just knowledge—it was dominance.

The one performing it had to be significantly stronger than the target, not merely equal.

The greater the difference in cultivation, the higher the success rate. At the same realm, it was simply... impossible.

Unless...

Her breath caught.

Unless Bai Zihan wasn’t truly at the Spirit Severing Realm.

A dreadful possibility began to take root.

Could it be... he was hiding his true cultivation?

"Is he in the Void Refinement Realm?"

After all, that is the minimum cultivation needed to even attempt Soul Search on Spirit Severing Realm cultivators.

That might also explain why Bai Zihan was able to win so easily against the two of them.

(But that doesn’t make sense.)

A person who hasn’t even hit twenty, being in the Void Refinement Realm—which can be considered one of the highest in the Desolate Heaven Empire?

Most sect and clan leaders are only in that realm. Only the top, strongest clan and sect leaders have a higher cultivation realm.

(You want me to believe that he is on the same level as them?)

Even geniuses have their limits. It would already be considered monstrous if, at his age, he had reached Soul Formation.

Above that, it was no longer just talent—it was Heaven itself blessing you directly.

In front of them, Bai Zihan's hand tightened, and the air between him and the first cultivator seemed to twist, like heat haze over stone.

The man let out a strangled scream, his head snapping back, veins bulging at his temples as his eyes rolled white.

Invisible ripples spread outward—Immortal Emperor Feilian's doing, hidden within Bai Zihan's body—but to Kong Zhanghong and Xie Wanshou, it looked as if Bai Zihan's Qi was drilling directly into the man's soul.

Kong Zhanghong swallowed hard.

He'd already thought the torture before was too much even for his enemy. But this—this was something else entirely.

"ARGHHHH!"

The man's scream rose to a piercing pitch, then cut off abruptly—like a string snapping.

Bai Zihan's fingers slowly uncurled, and the body slumped forward, lifeless. His skin had gone ashen-gray, lips cracked, and his eyes were wide but empty.

Inwardly, Bai Zihan's voice was calm.

"Did you find anything?"

From within, the First Immortal Emperor's presence stirred—cool, ancient, and steady.

She shook her head, her tone even but with a faint thread of irritation.

"I saw his memories... but the location of the organization is unclear. Too hazy. It feels like the organization tampered with his soul beforehand, so that even a Soul Search cannot uncover it. Another possibility..."

She paused briefly.

"...is that he never truly knew the location to begin with—only fragments. That would explain why the images are so incomplete."

Bai Zihan's gaze lowered to the corpse. The man's skin had shriveled unnaturally, as if the very essence had been drawn from him.

His breath had stopped long before his heart realized it.

He stepped over the body without a word, closing in on the second cultivator.

The man was already trembling violently, his teeth chattering as Bai Zihan's shadow fell over him.

"W-wait!"

The words were cut off as Bai Zihan's hand rose again, fingers forming that same claw.

He had already given them a chance, and looking at the man, he could tell he was just about to start begging to be spared.

It still didn't seem like he was going to tell him the location; perhaps he didn't even know it.

Heat shimmer twisted between them. The second cultivator's pupils dilated in terror before his head snapped back in the same agonized arc.

Invisible power dug into his mind, peeling away layers of thought, ripping past his will like paper.

The Immortal Emperor's voice returned after a moment, the same verdict as before.

"Same result. Hazy. Either tampered... or doesn't know!"

A faint sigh echoed in his mind.

"If they have someone capable of soul-sealing to this degree, then their foundation might be deeper than you think. Be careful if you are thinking about going after them."

Then she vanished into the Soul Confining Artifact again.

Bai Zihan released him. The body sagged to the ground like a puppet with its strings cut. Skin cracked, vitality gone—another dried husk.

Silence weighed heavy in the room.

Kong Zhanghong felt his knees weaken, while Xie Wanshou's expression had shifted into something far more guarded.

They had thought they were dealing with a ruthless young master.

Now, they weren't sure if the thing standing before them was even human.

Gulp!

Xie Wanshou couldn't help but feel a shiver in her bones.

(Such ruthlessness... just what does the Bai Clan even teach their young?)

Bai Zihan walked towards her, frustration clear in his eyes.

She kept her gaze low so as not to provoke his anger.

"Hmph! Useless!"

Still, there was one thing that could lead him to the location of the mysterious organization that might have tried to kill him.

Xie Wanshou!

"I will spare your life, but from now on you must listen to me!"

Bai Zihan demanded.

Xie Wanshou quickly nodded her head.

"Kong Zhanghong!"

"Yes, Young Master!"

"He will be my representative from now on. Do what he says and help him when he asks for it."

Bai Zihan ordered Xie Wanshou.

From now on, he was going to control Black Lantern Society until he got to that organization.

Then, turning to Kong Zhanghong, he continued, "Make use of the Black Lantern Society to gather more information, but try to keep our involvement a secret."

"Understood!"

Kong Zhanghong realized what Bai Zihan wanted, and plans were already forming in his head.

With the Black Lantern Society, collecting information would be much easier since they already had a network in place.

"And you—immediately inform me if that organization approaches you. Try something and your fate will be the same as theirs!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 238: Second Round! [ 1,526 words ]

### *Chapter 238: Second Round!*

Three days passed in the blink of an eye for many people.

With the start of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, the atmosphere in the Desolate Heaven Empire had been anything but quiet.

Excitement rippled through every city and town, and conversations about the competition had become part of daily life.

Discussing the participants' battles and placing bets on who would emerge victorious was no longer just entertainment—it was a frenzy.

Everywhere—whether in tea houses fragrant with fresh brews, bustling inns filled with traveling merchants, or even on the busy streets where hawkers shouted over the noise—people still spoke of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

And among all the names on people's lips, one was mentioned more than most: Nie Fengzhuo.

A dark horse who had stunned the Empire by eliminating one of the Zhao Clan's elite participants.

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In those three days...

The Zhao Clan remained silent, but silence did not mean peace.

Their pride was deeply wounded, and their members could not hide the resentment burning in their eyes whenever Nie Fengzhuo's name was spoken.

Bai Zihan's name, curiously enough, began circulating alongside Nie Fengzhuo's—because word had spread that the Bai Clan's young master intended to recruit him.

Bai Xueqing, in her usual composed way, had spent the three days training harder than before.

The bet between her and Bai Zihan gave her an extra reason to win the tournament, beyond the glory or rewards on offer.

There was one question she wanted answered, and she intended to wring it out of Bai Zihan no matter what:

Had he always been hiding his true strength?

Was the man she thought she knew just faking his power all this time?

Well, she told herself, once she won this tournament, she would have her answers.

To her, that truth would be a reward far greater than any prize the competition could offer.

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The tournament grounds had been meticulously restored in the interim.

The shattered tiles of the arena were replaced with gleaming new slabs of reinforced white jade.

Formation masters had repaired and strengthened the barrier which had been damaged.

On the morning of the second round, the sun rose like molten gold, its light spilling over the arena and bathing the stands in a warm glow.

The stands were already packed long before the first match was scheduled to begin.

Excitement crackled in the air; everyone knew that the second round would be far more intense than the first, especially since most of the weaker participants had already been eliminated.

The overseer once again stepped onto the central platform, his white robes fluttering in the light breeze.

Intricate formation lines beneath his feet lit up, amplifying his voice across the arena with perfect clarity.

"Ladies and gentlemen!"

He began, his tone both formal and charged with anticipation.

"Welcome to the Second Round of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition! I know you were excited after the first round, but that was nothing more than a prelude for what is to come."

Cheers erupted from the crowd like a wave crashing against stone.

For this round, unlike the first, each participant has known their opponent in advance.

They have had three days to prepare—no surprises, only strength and strategy!

Although there wasn't much prominent fight between those considered favorites to win, still there were many good enough fights.

When the battles began, the difference from the first round was immediately obvious.

Gone were the easy victories born from mismatched cultivation levels. Now,

most duels were razor-close, the combatants trading blows until the outcome teetered on a knife's edge.

The platform shook under the force of their strikes, and the air itself seemed to tremble with the clash of spiritual power. Every fierce exchange drew gasps and shouts from the audience.

Yet amid these grueling contests, there were also matches that ended almost instantly—fights so decisive that they silenced the crowd before the cheering even began.

Eight names dominated these moments of ruthless efficiency:

Bai Xueqing, Chu Ziyang, Li Meiyang, Nie Fengzhuo, Jin Yuanzhan, Zhao Chen, Lei Zhensheng, and Shui Lian'er.

Each of them dispatched their opponents in seconds, with such overwhelming force that even seasoned elders shifted uncomfortably in their seats.

Whether it was through a single sword stroke, a crushing palm strike, or a blinding flurry of techniques, they left no doubt in anyone's mind: they were not merely participants—they were predators among prey.

Even Jin Yuanzhan, despite sustaining heavy injuries during his battle with Lin Xuan in the first round, now looked completely recovered.

His effortless victory removed any lingering doubts about his ability to continue.

Many even began to suspect whether his struggle in the first match with Lin Xuan was even real.

Perhaps it was all a ploy to make others underestimate him?

Whether it is true or not, it will all be revealed in the coming days.

Nie Fengzhuo once again displayed overwhelming dominance, defeating an opponent from the Azure Sun Holy Sect in such a fashion that it became yet another major upset to his name.

His performance now cemented him as one of the most prominent figures of the competition.

Still, the favorite to win in the public eye was Bai Xueqing, who had yet to reveal any weaknesses in her matches.

And as the dust from the last of these instant victories settled, the arena was still brimming with excitement.

Not only because of the battles they had just witnessed—but also because of what was coming next.

There were many interesting matchups on the roster for the third round, but one stood above all others in the public's expectations:

Chu Ziyan vs. Lei Zhensheng!

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Another three days passed.

The capital was electric with anticipation.

The third round of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition was not just another stage—it was the beginning of the true clashes between the strongest contenders.

And for the first time, two of the most feared names would face each other.

Chu Ziyan vs. Lei Zhensheng!

Everyone had been waiting for this match.

It was one of the most anticipated battles of the entire tournament.

Both fighters were widely regarded as championship material.

Both had swept through their earlier rounds without a hint of trouble. But now, one of them would be eliminated here and now.

Many believed Lei Zhensheng held the advantage—he was older, more experienced, and before Bai Xueqing and Bai Zihan rose to prominence, he had been considered the strongest of his generation.

While most agreed that in terms of raw talent, Bai Xueqing or Bai Zihan might eventually surpass him, there was still fierce debate about whether either of them could actually defeat him.

After all, Lei Zhensheng was said to have defeated Soul Formation Realm elders in battle.

With his mastery of the Thunder Dao, his techniques were as destructive as they were swift—one hit was often all it took for him to claim victory.

Yet no one dismissed Chu Ziyang.

The prodigy of the Heaven Sword Sect, she had risen through the ranks at a speed that once made some believe she might rival Bai Xueqing herself.

While she lacked the vast resources of the Bai Clan, her talent was undeniable.

There were not many official achievements to her name compared to the older elites, but her cultivation had already reached the Soul Formation Realm—making her one of the top contenders of the entire competition.

Her battle with Li Xuan in the war between Bai Clan and Li-Zhao Clan was still spoken of, and everyone knew she was not to be underestimated.

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Their match was the seventh of the day, and anticipation built with every passing fight.

By the time the sixth match ended, the stands were buzzing with barely contained excitement.

The overseer stepped forward, voice echoing across the arena through the amplification array:

"Seventh match! Chu Ziyang of the Heaven Sword Sect VS Lei Zhensheng of the Crimson Thunder Hall!"

A deafening cheer exploded from the stands.

"Finally! I was waiting for this!"

"I've bet all my savings on Lei Zhensheng. No way the strongest of our generation is going to lose to a girl."

"Chu Ziyan is strong, but not strong enough. The Chu Clan's techniques won't be enough to defeat someone being groomed as Crimson Thunder Hall's next sect leader."

"Tch! Even his wife is participating—why is Bai Zihan still hiding like a coward?"

...

"Both contestants, step forward!"

Yan Minglan announced.

"Ziyan'er," Bai Xueqing said with a warm but steady smile, "let them witness your true strength."

Chu Ziyan only gave a nod before stepping into the arena.

Lei Zhensheng also entered with a powerful aura radiating from his body, thunder crackling with excitement.

The roar from the crowd was deafening.

"GO! GO! Lei Zhensheng!"

"Chu Ziyan, you can do it!"

Lei Zhensheng stood tall, long hair tied behind his back, his presence calm yet oppressive—like a mountain looming over the battlefield.

Chu Ziyan, in contrast, was silent and still, her hand resting lightly on the hilt of her sword, eyes half-lidded as if nothing in the world could disturb her composure.

The overseer raised his hand.

"Begin!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 239: Chu Ziyan Vs Lei Zhensheng! [ 1,239 words ]

*Chapter 239: Chu Ziyan Vs Lei Zhensheng!*

Before either could make a move, Lei Zhensheng's lips curved into a faint smile.

He lowered his sword, clearly not feeling any urgency to begin.

"You know," he said, "it's a shame someone as beautiful as you is engaged to that Bai Zihan."

He shook his head with a mocking chuckle.

"I was looking forward to crushing him myself... but the moment he saw my name on the roster, he disappeared like the coward he is."

Lei Zhensheng's eyes roamed over Chu Ziyang, his expression dripping with condescension.

"I don't know why someone as pretty as you is still with a coward like him."

Chu Ziyang's eyes snapped open.

"Hah? If Bai Zihan were here," she said, "the moment you muttered such nonsense, your head would already be touching the ground."

Her gaze sharpened

"And you—Lei Zhensheng—you aren't even worthy to clean my fiancé's shoes. Consider yourself fortunate he's not here!"

Lei Zhensheng's smirk faltered for the briefest moment before he laughed, the sound edged with anger.

"Haha... We'll see if you can still talk like that after I break you. And I wonder how Bai Zihan would react."

Chu Ziyang's only response was to shift her stance, her fingers tightening on her sword hilt.

Whoosh!

Lei Zhensheng's figure blurred the instant the overseer signaled the start.

Lightning crackled faintly along his frame, and then—he vanished.

The next instant, a blinding streak of sword-light tore across the arena.

Chu Ziyang twisted to the side just in time, her robes whipping from the wind pressure alone.

A sharp BOOM! erupted behind her as Lei Zhensheng's blade cleaved into the arena floor, sending stone and dust spraying outward like shrapnel.

The impact left a jagged scar several meters long, the fractured ground still sizzling with lingering arcs of violet lightning.

The crowd gasped—not just at the destruction, but at the sheer speed.

Until now, Lei Zhensheng hadn't even shown fifty percent of the speed he used against Chu Ziyang.

Lei Zhensheng straightened, his sword humming with thunder.

It wasn't merely physical speed—his Thunder Dao infused every motion, turning him into a storm given form.

Fast! Strong! Deadly!

There wasn't a single visible weakness.

"Too slow!"

Lei Zhensheng taunted, flickering forward again.

His afterimages swirled around her, each step punctuated by a faint thunderclap, each sword stroke carrying the weight of annihilation.

But Chu Ziyán's eyes did not waver.

The storm of sword-light and thunder crashed down from every angle—yet not a single strike found its mark.

Chu Ziyán moved like flowing water, each step a ripple, each turn a gliding arc.

Her sword swept through the air with such effortless grace that the deadly onslaught seemed almost... choreographed.

Robes fluttering, hair streaming behind her, she danced between Lei Zhensheng's killing blows as though she had all the time in the world.

The edge of his blade grazed only wind and shadow, never her flesh.

Gasps rippled through the spectators.

This was not desperate evasion—it was artistry.

Every dodge, every pivot, every parry carried a rhythm, a precision that spoke of countless hours honing her craft.

"You think you can win just by dodging?"

Lei Zhensheng was getting irritated by how easily his attacks were being dodged.

He was fairly confident that with his speed, there weren't many capable of avoiding his attacks.

Yet, despite several strikes, he had managed to land none—and that too against someone who was fairly unknown.

Compared to others, perhaps Chu Ziyán's fame wasn't widely spread, especially since Bai Zihan's fame overshadowed hers.

But many forgets just how strong she truly is.

Still, Lei Zhensheng thought he would only need to land a single hit to win.

He assumed that if Chu Ziyán's specialty was speed, then her strength wouldn't be that great.

So, he aimed for a hit she would have no choice but to defend against.

Slash! Slash!

Lei Zhensheng's blade carved arcs of searing light through the air, the thunder within crackling louder, sharper.

Then, with a sharp exhale, he planted his foot and unleashed—

"Twin Thunders Rend the Sky!"

From his sword burst two jagged bolts of violet lightning, lancing out to either side of Chu Ziyán.

The arcs crashed into the arena floor, searing black lines that twisted and forked outward until they formed a deadly corridor.

The air vibrated with raw power. One wrong step and the lightning would tear straight through flesh and bone.

The crowd understood instantly—her freedom of movement was gone.

She could no longer weave and circle as before. The thunder's range forced her to move only forward or backward... straight into Lei Zhensheng's killing zone.

Lei Zhensheng's lips curled into a triumphant grin.

"Got you!"

Whoosh!

In a single flicker, he appeared before her, sword raised high, the hum of his Thunder Dao reaching a deafening crescendo.

"This ends now!"

His blade descended like a lightning-split mountain, a blow meant to crush her utterly.

CLANG!

The shockwave rang across the arena.

But the one who staggered back wasn't Chu Ziyán—it was Lei Zhensheng.

Chu Ziyán stood firm, her own sword braced against his, not an inch of ground ceded. Her grip was steady, her stance unshaken, her eyes cold and unyielding.

The moment of impact had shattered not just his attack, but his certainty.

She hadn't just blocked him—she had matched him in raw strength.

Lei Zhensheng's pupils contracted.

"Impossible...!"

In his mind, speed and strength were always trade-offs.

If she was fast enough to evade him all this time, then she shouldn't have the power to meet him head-on.

And yet, here she was, deflecting his full-force blow like it was nothing more than an annoyance.

(Could she have practiced Thunder Dao like him?)

He didn't think so—she hadn't used a single thunder technique since the beginning.

He believed that only those with Thunder Dao were perfect and strongest, capable of insane speed and destructive power.

But someone without Thunder Dao was able to obtain both—he didn't know what to think.

Still, he didn't lose his confidence in winning.

That would just mean he would need to reveal his true strength, which he thought was quite a waste since it was only the third round of the competition.

On the other hand, Chu Ziyao was now getting ready for her counterattack.

With a sudden shift, her sword trembled—once, twice—before unleashing a brilliant arc of light.

The ground beneath her feet seemed to pulse as she called upon the Chu Family's treasured Earth-Grade technique, "Crimson Petal Tempest!"

The strike bloomed like a field of scarlet blossoms, petals of sword-qi spinning outward in a blinding flurry, each one sharp enough to pierce steel.

The arena trembled beneath the force, the petals converging toward Lei Zhensheng from every direction.

For the first time, the audience leaned forward, holding their breath.

But Lei Zhensheng... only smiled.

With a single, almost lazy sweep of his sword, lightning burst from the blade like an exploding star.

CRACK!

The petals shattered mid-flight, dissolving into fragments of dissipating qi. The tempest was gone in an instant, erased as though it had never been.

Lei Zhensheng stepped forward through the fading glow, his aura swelling with thunderous dominance.

"Pretty trick," he said coldly. "But far too fragile."

His next step cracked the arena floor like brittle ice and finally his cultivation was revealed.

He wasn't just in the Soul Formation Realm but in the Mid Soul Formation Realm.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 240: Mid Soul Formation Realm! [ 1,349 words ]

*Chapter 240: Mid Soul Formation Realm!*

"What? Lei Zhensheng has reached the Mid Soul Formation Realm?"

"Just how much of a monster is he? Even reaching the Soul Formation Realm is as difficult as going up against Heaven, but he goes beyond and reaches the Mid Soul Formation Realm."

"I thought Chu Ziyang had a chance, but it looks like it will be Lei Zhensheng's victory."

...

While only a difference of a single minor realm, it was bigger than a realm difference when one is in the Core Formation Stage or lower realms.

To advance in the Soul Formation Realm was extremely difficult, often taking years.

Therefore, under twenty-five years of age, there were almost none who went beyond the Early Soul Formation Realm.

But Lei Zhensheng had done it.

The moment his cultivation flared in full, a wave of oppressive pressure rolled through the arena.

Stone tiles groaned and cracked beneath the weight of his aura; the very air seemed to tighten until each breath felt like swallowing thunder.

Lei Zhensheng's long hair whipped behind him, crackling arcs of violet lightning dancing across his frame.

His eyes glinted like storm-forged steel as his voice cut through the heavy silence.

"Now... let's see how you dance."

Boom!

His figure blurred—not merely fast, but so fast the space he vacated rippled like water disturbed by a stone.

One heartbeat, he was yards away. The next, his sword was already descending toward Chu Ziyān's shoulder with enough force to split a boulder in two.

Clang!

The blow struck—

And was deflected.

Chu Ziyān hadn't just dodged—she had turned his killing stroke aside with a flick of her wrist, the sound sharp and clean, her stance as steady as a mountain.

Lei Zhensheng's brows knit.

(She reacted? Even at this speed?)

He vanished again, this time his blade becoming a streak of lightning that curved like a serpent, aimed straight for her flank.

Clang!

Again, the strike was met and deflected.

The spectators gasped.

It was as though his leap into full strength had done... nothing.

Lei Zhensheng landed lightly a few paces away, his breathing calm but his mind in turmoil.

(No—this wasn't possible.)

He had just revealed the power that crushed his peers, the speed that none could follow...

Yet the woman before him moved with the same composure, the same unshaken poise, as though nothing had changed.

"What..." he muttered under his breath, eyes narrowing. "What is going on here?"

Slowly, he looked at her—really looked.

Chu Ziyān stood there, her sword lowered slightly, calm as still water. But now... now he could sense it.

A faint ripple beneath the surface, like a great beast resting in the depths.

His eyes widened in disbelief.

"You..." his voice was low, almost incredulous. "...You're also in the Mid Soul Formation Realm?"

Chu Ziyan didn't answer.

However, there was no need for her answer—her speed and the power behind her parries had already said everything.

The crowd murmured in growing disbelief.

Just when they had convinced themselves that Lei Zhensheng had been hiding his true strength... Chu Ziyan revealed she had been doing the same.

"She's... also in the Mid Soul Formation Realm?"

"No way! How is this possible? In the previous Dragon and Phoenix Competition, there was only Early Soul Formation Realm. Now, there is two?"

"Perhaps the winner of this match would eventually become the winner of the Competition."

...

In the arena, Chu Ziyan's eyes gleamed like tempered steel. Her sword rose once more, and in the next breath—

Shing!

She moved.

The Chu Family's Earth-Grade technique unfolded again, but now, infused with the full depth of her cultivation, each arc of her blade cut the air like a tidal wave crashing down.

The air itself rippled, the ground splintering under the shockwaves of her strikes.

Lei Zhensheng met them head-on.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Lightning roared from his sword with every clash, scattering her energy like fragile glass.

His strikes didn't just block—they tore her techniques apart mid-flight, shattering them into harmless motes of qi.

"Even so..." he said, stepping through the storm of shattered sword-light, "...your technique lacks power. That will be your downfall!"

His words landed like a hammer.

The audience exchanged grim looks.

"He's right. Without a Heaven-Grade technique, she'll never overpower him."

"She's fast, she's strong, but Lei Zhensheng's foundation is terrifying. He has the Crimson Thunder Palace—one of the sect's Heaven-Grade techniques."

"If he uses that... it's over!"

After all, even if two people have the same talent, background makes a difference.

With Lei Zhensheng being the heir of the Crimson Thunder Palace, the techniques he is taught would be far superior to anything Chu Ziyan could learn in her Chu Clan or Heaven Sword Sect.

On the stage, Lei Zhensheng's sword dipped slightly, his free hand curling into a complex seal.

Violet lightning shifted—deepening, darkening—until streaks of blood-red thunder began to coil around him like a living dragon.

The oppressive pressure doubled, then tripled, pressing on the lungs of every spectator.

"This..." one of the elders in the stands whispered, "...this is it. The Crimson Thunder Palace's Strongest Technique."

Lei Zhensheng's gaze locked on Chu Ziyan.

"Be honored," he said, his voice a low growl beneath the rumble of thunder.

"You'll be the first to fall under this technique in three years."

The arena held its breath.

Lei Zhensheng's voice rang out like a peal of thunder:

"Crimson Thunder Descent!"

The air above the arena darkened, clouds boiling into existence out of nowhere.

Scarlet lightning coiled through them like serpents of the apocalypse, each arc carrying the scent of burning metal.

The ground beneath his feet blackened and cracked, hairline fractures racing outward in all directions.

A single step forward—and the storm moved with him.

From the stands, cultivators shielded their eyes against the searing glare.

But Chu Ziyang was not idle.

Her stance shifted, drawing her blade close to her chest, qi surging through her meridians in an unbroken tide.

The arena's shattered tiles trembled beneath her feet, fine cracks forming in a perfect ring around her.

Lei Zhensheng's gaze sharpened, then curved into a smirk.

"You're still preparing? Foolish! My Crimson Thunder Descent is the most destructive art under heaven—there is nothing you can use to defend against it. You're wasting your time!"

He raised his sword, lightning roaring louder, pressing down like the wrath of the heavens.

In the corner, the referee's brow furrowed.

He was preparing to rescue Chu Ziyang and needed to be quick. Who knows what would be the result if he delayed even for a second?

If she failed to defend herself, the strike would cripple her—or worse.

However, even with his Spirit Severing Realm, Crimson Thunder Descent isn't going to be easy for him to handle.

But then—

Boom!

A surge of qi erupted from Chu Ziyang, not wild but refined, each strand sharp as a drawn blade.

The wind screamed around her, condensing into the shape of countless swords that shimmered in midair, their edges humming in unison.

Her lips parted—

"Heaven Severing Tide!"

Sword-light poured forth like an endless ocean, each wave cresting higher and sharper than the last, converging into a single, blinding arc aimed straight at Lei Zhensheng's storm.

The elders in the high seats jolted forward.

"That's..."

"A Heaven-Grade technique?!"

"I thought the Chu Clan possessed none—where did she learn this?"

"That doesn't seem to be a technique from Heaven Sword Sect either."

...

Many powerful elders could quickly identify the technique grade just from the power, and most of them were already familiar with almost all the Heaven-Grade techniques in Desolate Heaven Empire but had never seen the one Chu Ziyan used.

On the other hand, Bai Zihan just sat calmly, knowing where she got the technique from.

The Ancient Ruins!

She, along with 9 others like himself, had mastered the Heaven-Grade Technique. This technique, he was sure, she got from the Ancient Ruins.

Below, Lei Zhensheng's confident grin froze for the briefest instant.

Scarlet thunder and oceanic sword-light met in the center of the arena—

And the world shook.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 241: Third Round Ends! [1,611 words ]

*Chapter 241: Third Round Ends!*

The moment sword-light met thunder, the heavens seemed to tear apart.

A roar like a thousand storms erupted, drowning the arena in blinding light.

The ground split open, jagged cracks racing outward, while the air itself seemed to combust under the clash of two Heaven-Grade techniques.

The protective barrier around the arena shuddered violently, its translucent surface rippling as though it might burst at any moment.

"Formation Masters, now!"

Several robed figures leapt forward, their hands weaving rapid seals.

Streams of golden light surged from their palms, reinforcing the barrier just as a second wave of the explosion slammed against it.

The audience was forced to shield their eyes.

Boom!

Another shockwave tore through, rattling teeth and making hearts skip a beat.

The arena floor was barely recognizable—a wasteland of shattered stone and smoking craters.

Then... silence!

The blinding light dimmed, the thunder faded, and the dust began to settle.

All eyes strained toward the center, breaths held tight.

Two figures stood amid the devastation.

Chu Ziyán's robes were torn and stained with blood, her sword trembling slightly in her hand.

Her breathing was ragged, her knees threatening to buckle.

Gasps rippled through the stands.

"She's badly hurt... she can't continue."

"It's over—Lei Zhensheng's victory is certain."

"Hahaha... I'm rich! I told you Lei Zhensheng would definitely win!"

But then... someone pointed.

"No... look!"

The dust thinned enough to reveal the other side—Lei Zhensheng's figure sprawled motionless on the fractured tiles, his sword lying several feet away.

His chest heaved faintly, but his eyes were closed, and the burns across his arms and neck told the story—he was unconscious, his qi utterly spent.

Shock silenced the arena for three heartbeats... and then the stands erupted.

"Chu Ziyán... she won?!"

"Impossible! How can Lei Zhensheng lose?"

"Dammit! I lost all my fortune. My wife is going to beat me up!"

...

The referee appeared beside Lei Zhensheng in a flash, checking his pulse before turning to raise a hand high.

"Winner—Chu Ziyán!"

The roar from the crowd shook the reinforced barrier itself.

Even in her exhaustion, Chu Ziyang straightened her back, meeting the gazes of thousands with the calm dignity of a cultivator who had nothing left to prove.

Then her gaze turned towards a certain man, Bai Zihan, who was also looking at her.

Still indifferent, and she didn't know what he thought of this.

Perhaps for him, this victory was nothing more than a child's play.

After all, he had already beaten the Spirit Severing Realm. So, what was the Mid Soul Formation Realm?

Sigh!

The Medical Team moved quickly to tend to Lei Zhensheng, who had fallen.

The Crimson Thunder Palace was still in disbelief.

Their best participant, eliminated in the third round?

They hadn't expected this.

While on the other hand, Heaven Sword Sect all wore smug expressions, some even directly taunting Crimson Thunder Palace, who earlier had been doing the same to them.

Chu Ziyang was also escorted out by the Medical Team.

Although she could still stand, it was undeniable that she had also suffered heavy injuries.

She needed immediate medical attention.

"The 8th match..."

The remaining match continued, but still, the fight between Chu Ziyang and Lei Zhensheng remained in everyone's head.

The third round soon came to a close, but its most shocking moment—one that would be talked about—was undoubtedly Chu Ziyang's victory over Lei Zhensheng.

With that, the Top Sixteen were decided—cultivators hailed as the cream of the crop among all geniuses under twenty-five in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

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As the competition entered its three-day break, the city's excitement didn't fade.

Instead, it shifted to an event that was almost as anticipated as the Dragon and Phoenix Competition itself—The Grand Radiance Auction.

Renowned as the largest and most prestigious auction in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire, it drew not only the great sects and clans, but even hidden experts and wandering cultivators.

Treasures beyond imagination would go under the hammer—sometimes even the Heaven-Grade Artifacts.

The streets were already buzzing. Invitations were guarded like gold, and those without one could only dream of stepping into the legendary auction hall.

And of course, Bai Zihan, being the heir of the Bai Clan, obviously had one of the invitation cards.

However, more than buying treasures that could be auctioned, he was more interested in another thing—and that was selling treasures.

With the treasure hoard that he had accumulated—or rather, been given by Immortal Emperor Feilian for not getting the Inheritance—he could be considered perhaps the richest in the Desolate Heaven Empire, and perhaps beyond that as well.

The auction house loomed ahead like a palace of wealth—its towering jade pillars carved with phoenixes and dragons, its golden roof glimmering under the midday sun.

Even from the street, one could feel the aura of countless treasures within.

Bai Zihan walked at a leisurely pace, hands clasped behind his back, while Kong Zhanghong followed half a step behind, glancing around with curiosity.

The bustling street was lined with cultivators from all walks of life, some dressed in the silks of noble clans, others in rugged traveling robes, each carrying the air of expectation.

The moment they approached the grand entrance, two guards in golden armor straightened sharply.

Their eyes flickered in recognition, and the cold indifference that had been on their faces a moment ago vanished instantly.

"Young Master Bai!"

One of the guards immediately stepped forward, bowing deeply, his voice tinged with respect.

"Please, this way!"

He and his partner straightened and moved to escort Bai Zihan through the towering golden doors.

Once inside the cool, jade-lined hall, the first guard halted and offered another bow.

"Kindly wait here for just a moment, Young Master. We will inform the manager of your arrival."

Without further delay, he turned and hurried deeper into the building.

Within moments, the heavy doors parted again, and a middle-aged man in a richly embroidered robe hurried out.

His forehead was already beaded with sweat, though not from the summer heat but from nervousness.

"Esteemed Young Master Bai Zihan!"

The man bent at the waist in a respectful bow.

"What an unexpected honor. What brings you to the Grand Radiance Auction Hall today?"

Bai Zihan didn't bother with pleasantries. His tone was calm, almost casual.

"I have some things to sell."

The manager's brows twitched, but he forced a polite smile.

"Naturally, the Grand Radiance Auction is always open to our honored guests. However..."

His tone became slightly cautious.

"We do have standards for items we consign for tomorrow's auction. Generally, nothing below the value of a Profound Grade Artifact is accepted."

Bai Zihan's lips curved in the faintest of chuckles.

"You don't have to worry about that."

He flicked his sleeve, and the air between them shimmered.

In an instant, five gleaming artifacts appeared on the low table nearby—each radiating the steady, overwhelming aura of an Earth-Grade Artifact.

The manager froze, his practiced composure cracking.

"Five...? All Earth-Grade?"

His voice dropped to a whisper, as though afraid the mere sound might draw covetous eyes from outside.

"Young Master, you want to sell all five of them?"

The manager asked in disbelief.

Bai Zihan calmly nodded.

"That's not all!"

Another wave of his hand, and five ancient scrolls materialized, their bindings sealed with faint spiritual light.

The air grew heavier, saturated with profound intent.

"Earth-Grade techniques!"

Bai Zihan said lightly.

This time the manager's knees almost buckled.

"Young Master Bai... Are you certain?"

"I'm certain!"

Bai Zihan's expression didn't waver.

In his eyes, those Earth-Grade Techniques were almost useless because he had Heaven-Grade Techniques and even Saint-Grade Techniques.

He had also already given the best techniques to the Bai Clan. Compared to them, these techniques could be considered subpar.

But he also knew that what wasn't very valuable in his eyes was extremely valuable in the eyes of others.

Of course, he only took out a very small percentage of the treasures he possessed.

If he revealed them all, there would be no one in the Desolate Heaven Empire who could afford them.

"Oh, there is another thing I wish to sell."

With an almost casual flick of his wrist, Bai Zihan drew from his storage ring a folding fan wreathed in a faint golden glow.

The moment it appeared, the air seemed to ripple, and a sharp, majestic aura spread through the room like the sweep of a storm.

The fan's ribs were forged of gleaming azure metal, etched with flowing cloud patterns, while its silk surface shimmered with scenes of roaring dragons and coiling winds.

Each movement of the artifact released a subtle pulse of spiritual pressure, enough to make the seasoned manager's heart skip a beat.

His eyes widened in shock—he knew this fan.

"Th-This... this is the Celestial Feather Fan...!"

He breathed, instantly recognizing the famous Heaven-Grade artifact of the Zhao Clan.

He also knew that the artifact had fallen into Bai Zihan's hand after a bet on his engagement ceremony.

(He wants to auction this? Really?)

He could already imagine the expressions on the faces of the Zhao Clan members—but not only that, he could also see the bidding war that would ensue for this.

The manager swallowed hard, mind racing. One Heaven-Grade Artifact alone could alter the balance of power in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

And Bai Zihan was discarding one as though he didn't even care—plus ten other treasures, each one able to attract millions of gold coins from the powerhouses.

For a long moment, the man could only stare before finally finding his voice.

"Esteemed Young Master... I will personally see to your consignments. The auction will make... special arrangements."

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 242: Eleven Treasures, One Storm[ 1,018 words ]

*Chapter 242: Eleven Treasures, One Storm*

The moment Bai Zihan's figure vanished beyond the auction hall's golden doors, the respectful smile on the manager's face melted away—replaced by a serious and urgent expression.

Without wasting a breath, he turned sharply on his heel and strode toward the inner chambers.

His polished shoes clicked briskly against the jade floor as he bypassed startled attendants and guards.

He ascended the spiral staircase leading to the highest floor, where only the most restricted members of the Grand Radiance Auction were permitted to tread.

Pushing open a set of carved sandalwood doors, he entered a lavishly furnished room.

Behind a wide, phoenix-carved desk sat a woman draped in crimson silk, her beauty sharpened by the faint aura of someone who had long stood at the peak of power.

This was the Madam of the Grand Radiance Auction—its true owner.

The manager bowed deeply.

"Madam, the Bai Clan's young master... has just consigned eleven treasures."

She arched a perfectly shaped brow.

"Eleven?"

She was surprised that someone could auction eleven treasures of their standard, but thinking it was the Bai Clan, she didn't dwell on it too much.

After all, they had many profound-grade artifacts; perhaps they were auctioning off items they no longer had use for.

"Yes! Five Earth-Grade Artifacts, five Earth-Grade Techniques, and... one Heaven-Grade Artifact—the Celestial Feather Fan of the Zhao Clan... I mean, Bai Zihan's."

The brush in her hand paused mid-stroke, a faint gleam flashing in her eyes.

"Huh? Earth-Grade treasures and... a Heaven-Grade Artifact?"

Previously, she had thought the quantity was due to profound-grade artifacts—nothing remarkable.

But Earth-Grade and Heaven-Grade?

That was on another level. Combined, these treasures might already surpass everything else scheduled for auction tomorrow.

Especially since, for most treasures they auction, the value is uncertain—some could be better or worse than Earth-Grade depending on the bidding war.

But the Celestial Feather Fan was definitely valuable and would ensure the Zhao Clan bid for it.

Other clans wouldn't want to lose the opportunity to obtain a Heaven-Grade weapon either.

(But why would they want to sell it?)

A Heaven-Grade Artifact was the lifeline of a clan or sect and could even be considered their ultimate trump card.

Although there were rumors that Bai Zihan had his own Heaven-Grade sword, even so, auctioning off such an artifact wasn't a good move.

It could be bought by the Zhao or Li Clan, strengthening their power.

The same applied to the Earth-Grade treasures. Would the Bai Clan really sell them all?

Moreover, would they truly entrust all this to a youth—even if he was their heir?

And that fan... it was said to be Bai Zihan's personal possession.

So, was it the Bai Clan's property, or Bai Zihan's?

The former was more understandable, but the latter was almost impossible. Who would have such an arsenal of treasures—especially someone not yet twenty?

Her fingers tapped the desk lightly, the soft tok tok filling the silence.

"Perhaps there is more to this than it seems... but no matter."

Her gaze sharpened.

"Since we have such treasures in our possession, it is only right that we make this auction the most magnificent in the Grand Radiance's history."

(I had been worried that this year's auction might be a little lackluster... but fortunately, the Bai Clan's young master has brought us such remarkable treasures.)

She set down the brush and rose to her feet.

"Send word to every major sect, clan, and wandering powerhouse. Announce that treasures of unimaginable worth—including a Heaven-Grade Artifact—will be up for bidding."

The manager bowed again, a hint of excitement slipping into his voice.

"Yes, Madam. I will make the announcement... bigger than ever."

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They did not waste a single second.

Within moments, the Grand Radiance Auction's promotion machinery roared into motion.

Messengers were dispatched to every corner of the capital and beyond, carrying the explosive announcement—

"For the first time in decades, a Heaven-Grade Artifact will be auctioned! Those who miss this opportunity may never see such a chance again in their lifetime!"

The news spread like wildfire.

Banners and proclamation scrolls appeared overnight, fluttering in the wind along the bustling avenues of the imperial capital.

From teahouses to merchant halls, from quiet scholar courtyards to raucous training grounds, the same conversation dominated every breath: the auction.

The major clans and sects reacted first.

Some dispatched their fastest disciples to deliver the news to their elders, urging them to prepare funds without delay.

Others began liquidating rare materials and hoarded resources to gather as much wealth as possible.

For them, missing the Heaven-Grade Artifact was unthinkable—especially if it fell into a rival's hands.

The common folk, though they could never hope to bid, were no less stirred.

They speculated about who could possibly be selling such an artifact—and who might win the coming bidding war.

"Did you hear? The Grand Radiance Auction just announced a Heaven-Grade Artifact!"

"It could be anything—armor, a weapon, maybe even a flying treasure."

"I heard the Cloud Dragon Sect is selling off spirit herbs and beast cores just to bid for it."

"Ha! The Iron Sword Pavilion said they'd empty their vault before letting their rivals get it."

"Better bankrupt than let the enemy rise, eh? But it would be snatch by Major Sect or Clan. Others don't stand a chance."

"Should I also go and take a look?"

"Hah? Don't bother. You can't afford it!"

Indeed, the auction tickets...

If the Grand Radiance Hall's seats had been expensive before, they now reached insane heights.

A normal seat—already costly enough to feed an average family for a full year—was now selling for four times its original price, with desperate buyers still fighting for them.

The VIP seats were even more outrageous. Each one was worth the price of a Yellow-Grade Artifact, yet they vanished within hours.

As for the VVIP rooms, they were reserved solely for major sects and clans—something money could not buy.

The capital's air grew feverish, every street humming with anticipation.

The Grand Radiance Auction had not even begun, yet it had already shaken the Desolate Heaven Empire.

## Chapter 243: An Auction That Could Shake The Empire

*Chapter 243: An Auction That Could Shake The Empire*

The next day dawned under a sky as clear as polished jade.

By noon, the imperial capital's main thoroughfares were choked with people.

The Grand Radiance Auction Hall—its towering white jade façade draped in scarlet banners—looked more like the Imperial Palace than a marketplace.

Every street leading to it had been cordoned off by the Empire's Golden Armored Guard, their halberds gleaming in the sunlight.

By the time the sun's first rays struck the golden spire of the Grand Radiance Auction Hall, the wide avenue before it was already packed.

Merchants abandoned their stalls, scholars set aside their scrolls, and even wandering martial artists paused their training to secure a vantage point.

They were not here to bid. Most of them could not even dream of entering.

They were here to look.

To catch a glimpse of the people who would walk through those golden doors.

Already, the air had buzzed with murmurs as some of the empire's most distinguished factions had arrived—each appearance drawing gasps and hurried whispers.

The first to cause a stir had been the Crimson Thunder Palace, their disciples clad in crimson-black armor that seemed to spark faint arcs of lightning as they moved.

Leading them was their Vice Palace Master, a stern man whose very presence made the weaker onlookers feel as though thunder rumbled in their chests.

Next came the Heaven Sword Sect, but many of their participants weren't with them—including Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan.

Even so, Elder Qinglan was enough to cause a small commotion, especially with her beauty.

Many thought it was already worth it just to catch a glimpse of such heavenly grace.

Each new arrival was met with a fresh wave of awe.

And then—

"Look! It's the Li Clan's crest!"

Gasps rippled through the crowd as a black-and-gold war carriage rolled into view, pulled by eight Windhoof stallions.

The Li Clan Leader himself stepped down—Li Jianhong—along with the elders and participants of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, including Li Meiyang.

Several of the Li Clan's top elders followed close behind, each one a walking pillar of power.

No sooner had the crowd's murmurs settled than another wave of awe swept through them.

"The Zhao Clan Leader has come too!"

Zhao Wutian, clad in white robes embroidered with silver clouds, moved with the calm dignity of a scholar—but his presence pressed down like an invisible mountain.

Their entry made it clear: this was no ordinary auction.

The Li and Zhao Clan Leaders rarely appeared together in public unless it was a matter that could shake the Empire.

Last time, it was for the war with the Bai Clan. Now, it was for the bidding war that was certain to unfold.

The street suddenly parted again.

A glittering escort of imperial guards rode forward, surrounding two luxurious carriages—each marked with a different imperial crest.

One bore the emblem of the First Prince's faction, the other the crest of the Fourth Princess's court.

The First Prince, Yu Zidi, emerged first, his golden crown catching the light, a smile on his face.

His presence alone seemed to straighten the backs of the imperial guards.

The Fourth Princess followed soon after, stepping gracefully from her carriage.

Yu Qingya's attire was a masterwork of silks the color of moonlight, her every movement like ripples over still water.

Though her smile was warm, her eyes held the calm distance of someone used to watching the empire from a higher vantage.

Yu Zidi inclined his head with a perfectly measured bow.

"Qingya, it has been far too long. The capital's streets feel brighter with you here."

Yu Qingya's lips curved faintly.

"And yet, they were already bright with the First Prince's presence. I hear you have been... industrious these past months."

"A prince must remain diligent," Yu Zidi replied smoothly, the barest flicker of pride in his gaze.

"Today, I hope to secure a treasure worthy of the Empire's future."

"A treasure worthy of the Empire..."

She repeated softly, her eyes half-lidded as though weighing his words.

"Let us hope the auction contains something that truly meets such lofty ambitions."

The First Prince smiled, but said nothing further, only gesturing toward the golden doors.

It was then that the crowd erupted again.

Two more carriages had entered the street, each escorted by its own detachment of imperial guards.

The first bore the emblem of the Third Prince's household.

The second displayed the crest of the Seventh Prince's faction.

The Third Prince, Yu Wenzhao, descended first.

From the Seventh Prince's carriage came Yu Longxuan—broad-shouldered, his armor gleaming under the noonday sun.

Unlike the others, he did not bother with subtlety; his steps rang against the white jade pavement, every movement brimming with barely contained confidence.

Yu Zidi stepped forward with a practiced smile.

"Third Brother, Seventh Brother, you honor us with your presence. Today, let us—"

"Drop the act, Zidi," Yu Longxuan cut in, his voice carrying clearly over the crowd.

"You're not the Crown Prince yet!"

His grin widened, a challenge in his tone.

"Let's see who leaves here with the greatest treasure today. I've come for more than just the view."

Without waiting for a reply, he turned on his heel and strode into the Grand Radiance Auction Hall, his entourage following like a tide of steel and silk.

(That idiot!)

Yu Zidi thought, though outwardly he maintained his polite smile.

Yu Longxuan had no hint of humility and no idea how to act like a royal.

Yu Zidi, while angry, knew that showing his temper would yield nothing but a loss of face.

The Third Prince gave the faintest of nods to his elder brother, then moved to follow—calm where Longxuan had been fire, but no less formidable.

The air outside seemed to grow heavier.

If the auction hall's walls could speak, they would already be whispering of the storm gathering within.

But all these grand arrivals—while enough to make commoners dizzy—were merely the prelude.

A hush fell without warning, as though the air itself sensed what was coming.

From the far end of the boulevard, a lone white carriage appeared.

It was not ostentatious—its design was clean, elegant, almost understated—but it was drawn by ten Spirit Cloud Horses, their hooves never touching the ground, drifting forward on coils of pale mist.

At the head of the procession rode several Bai Clan elites, their formation tight and unyielding, parting the crowd like a blade through silk.

Then, from the white carriage at the center, a figure stepped down first—Bai Zihan.

Behind him came Chu Ziyang, her bright presence like a spark of flame in the winter air, and Bai Xueqing, cold-eyed and composed, each step matching his without hesitation.

More Bai Clan elites followed, their ranks immaculate, their eyes fixed forward.

It was a silent declaration to the empire: the Bai Clan had not come with its patriarch, nor did it need to.

Bai Zihan was the man who would speak for them today.

"That's him... Bai Zihan!"

"Li and Zhao Clan came with their Clan Leaders, but Bai Clan sent him? Can he handle the pressure?"

"He's not even twenty, but they let him lead the entire clan's appearance?"

"Is this the arrogance of the strongest clan of the Empire?"

The murmurs swirled like storm clouds, but none dared speak too loudly.

Bai Zihan did not so much as glance at the murmuring crowd.

The faint smile on his lips remained unchanged, as if neither praise nor doubt could reach him.

Well, nothing matters today except for making money!

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 244: An Opening Salvo in Gold! [ 1,120 words ]

### *Chapter 244: An Opening Salvo in Gold!*

Inside the Grand Radiance Auction Hall, the air was thick with the fragrance of rare incense, mingling with the faint hum of spiritual Qi.

Dozens of golden chandeliers blazed above, their light reflecting off the white jade floor in dazzling ripples.

The hall was vast, tiered like an imperial court—at the very front, the highest row of seats was reserved for the most exalted guests.

And already, most of them were filled.

On the left, the Li Clan occupied their section with a quiet, oppressive presence.

Li Jianhong sat at the head, his eyes half-closed, but every so often, a faint glimmer of sharp intent escaped his gaze.

Beside him, Li Meiying shifted slightly in her seat, her fingers tightening on the armrest.

The moment her eyes fell on the figure who had just walked in, a flicker of unease crossed her face, betraying a tension she quickly tried to mask.

Opposite them, the Zhao Clan sat in dignified stillness, Zhao Wutian upright and regal, his hands folded over the head of a dragon-carved cane.

Though he smiled faintly, his eyes followed Bai Zihan's every step—weighing, measuring.

There was no saying how much he hated Bai Zihan, for he was the reason they had lost so much face a year ago.

Not to mention, he had taken away their Heaven-Grade Artifact.

Between them sat the representatives of the imperial family—the First Prince, Yu Zidi, with his cultivated poise; the Fourth Princess, serene as the moon; and further down, the Third and Seventh Princes, each radiating their own brand of authority.

The Fourth Princess felt a flicker of irritation when she saw Bai Zihan. A year ago, she had proposed to him, and to this day, he has given no response—almost as if he didn't even care enough to reject her.

To him, his rejection back then had apparently been a final answer, one that needed no further explanation.

"Hmph!"

She believes that one day Bai Zihan will really regret this decision.

The moment Bai Zihan stepped through the golden doors, conversations dipped into silence for a second.

Then whispers and murmurs of discussion spread.

Everyone was now sure that Bai Zihan was the next Clan Leader—undisputed—just by how the elders acted around him.

The one who had been hailed as a waste and even thought to be replaced was now revered and respected throughout, though there were still those who disagreed, primarily because of his refusal to participate in the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

He walked straight forward, neither bowing nor offering the expected greetings to the imperial family or the clan leaders.

He passed the imperial family without so much as a nod, walked past the Li and Zhao Clans as though their presence was no more than background decoration, and made his way toward his VVIP Room.

The guards bowed deeply as he approached, stepping aside to open the heavy, gold-inlaid door that led to one of the hall's most coveted spaces—a private VVIP room with a commanding view of the auction stage.

Chu Ziyang and Bai Xueqing followed him inside, their expressions unbothered by the waves of whispers below.

Not long after they settled in, the lights in the grand hall dimmed slightly.

A delicate chime rang out, drawing all eyes to the stage.

From behind a silk screen, a graceful figure emerged—a woman in flowing crimson robes, her hair pinned high with jade ornaments, her smile warm enough to charm a stone statue.

When she stepped into the full glow of the chandeliers, the hall stirred with murmurs and appreciative whistles.

Several young cultivators leaned forward in their seats, while older merchants chuckled knowingly.

Indeed, the Grand Radiance Auction was famous for selecting one of the most beautiful women in its employ to preside over the event—a subtle yet effective way to set hearts racing and loosen purse strings.

She gave a graceful bow, her movements as fluid as a mountain stream.

"Honored guests," she began, her voice clear and melodious, yet carrying a practiced cadence that hooked attention, "this humble one is Lan Yuerong, and I will have the honor of presiding over tonight's auction."

That alone drew a fresh wave of cheers and applause from the audience.

A few bolder voices even called out compliments, earning scattered laughter.

Lan Yuerong's eyes curved in a light, knowing smile.

"It is our privilege to begin this year's event with an item most... extraordinary."

A ripple of curiosity moved through the hall.

She let the anticipation hang in the air before continuing.

"Our first treasure—one that will surely ignite the passion of every cultivator present—is a Mid Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique."

The effect was instantaneous.

Gasps, sharp intakes of breath, and even a few curses echoed from the audience.

A Mid Earth-Grade Technique was not something one simply bought.

In the entire empire, such manuals were closely guarded treasures, spoken of in the same breath as the legacies of the Three Major Clans and the Imperial Family.

Even the imperial princes leaned forward in their seats.

Li Jianhong's eyes opened fully for the first time, a flicker of surprise breaking his usual composure.

Zhao Wutian's hand tightened on his cane.

Who could have expected that the auction would start off with such a precious treasure?

"Impossible... how did the Grand Radiance Auction get their hands on this?"

A sect elder whispered to his neighbor.

The auctioneer's smile widened at the growing tension.

"Shall we begin at five hundred thousand gold?"

The first bid was immediate—

"Six hundred thousand!"

"Seven hundred!"

"One million!"

...

It was as though a battle had erupted in the hall. Sect leaders, clan elders, even imperial prince and princess threw their voices into the fray, each raising the price like they were fighting on a battlefield.

Only the Bai Clan section remained still.

The reason was simple—the cultivation manual on the stage belonged to Bai Zihan.

From his vantage point, a faint smile played at the corner of his lips.

However, the elders didn't know this, and they were anxious that it might fall into other hands.

"Young Master, shouldn't we also bid for it?"

One of the elders asked.

After all, even if it wasn't of much use to the Bai Clan—since nearly everyone cultivated their own Earth-Grade Technique—it would be dangerous if it fell into their enemies' hands.

Bai Zihan just shook his hand, showing that he wasn't interested and had no intention of bidding for it.

Some elders wanted to persuade Bai Zihan; however, they changed their minds when the bid reached two million gold.

For that much money, it made little sense for them to buy a cultivation technique they might never even use.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 245: Getting Rich Unnoticed[ 1,268 words ]

*Chapter 245: Getting Rich Unnoticed*

The price had already soared past two and a half million gold.

Laughter and tense murmurs echoed across the hall as another clan leader shouted his bid.

The auctioneer's smile never faltered, fanning the flames higher with every measured word.

By now, the price for the Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique had already climbed to three million gold.

The bidder—none other than the First Prince himself—sat with a composed smile, casually raising his paddle as though spending three million was no more than buying a cup of tea.

Seeing that it was First Prince, several other clans immediately withdrew.

To compete with the Imperial Family over such a treasure was courting disaster—and the technique, while rare, wasn't worth challenging the Empire's First Prince.

Not to mention, the price had already reached three million gold.

"Three million gold... once! Three million... twice! Three million... thrice! Sold!"

A crisp strike of the gavel echoed, sealing the deal.

The auctioneer's voice then carried across the hall:

"Congratulations to His Highness, the First Prince, for obtaining the Mid Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique!"

Polite applause and congratulation rose from the crowd.

"My thanks to everyone for allowing me this honor. May this treasure serve the Empire well!"

His tone was mild, almost humble—suggesting he sought the treasure for the good of the Empire.

Of course, those who knew better understood it would be used to strengthen his personal faction rather than the Empire.

His eloquence was on a completely different level from his siblings—especially the Seventh Prince, whose mouth had no filter.

With the gavel's sharp strike, the first item was officially sold—and at such an astronomical price, the hall seemed to vibrate with excitement.

The Mid Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique had set the bar impossibly high, and the murmurs quickly turned into eager speculation.

Everyone leaned forward, wondering what treasures would appear next—especially since the legendary Heaven-Grade Artifact was still to come.

Anticipation hung thick in the air, mingling with the lingering aroma of incense and the faint hum of spiritual qi.

Lan Yuerong's voice carried once more, calm and melodious, yet electrifying the hall:

"Honored guests, our auction has only just begun—many more treasures await."

An attendant stepped forward, carrying the first of the next items: an elegant Earth-Grade saber displayed on a jade stand.

The blade shimmered under the lantern light, silver veins running along its edge like flowing mercury.

"An exquisite weapon, sharp enough to part steel as if it were silk," the auctioneer announced.

Bids were called, modest but steady, until the saber was sold.

At 2 million, while not as good as the earlier one, it was a pretty good price.

The second artifact was brought out—a pair of bracers forged with intricate talisman patterns, faint spiritual light pulsing across their surface.

The audience examined them with interest, yet the bidding remained lukewarm, ending quickly.

Next came a small, ancient cauldron, its body etched with alchemical runes.

Though well-crafted, the atmosphere in the hall had already cooled, and it, too, was sold without much contest.

From his seat, Bai Zihan recognized each artifact immediately—they were his own consignments.

Watching them pass from hand to hand without drawing much attention, he remained expressionless.

He didn't bid for single item since the start of the auction while Li and Zhao Clan already snag two of the four Earth-Grade Techniques.

This was also seen by others.

Even the Bai Clan's elders noticed the absence of action and exchanged uneasy glances.

"This... isn't just about buying useful treasures anymore," one elder whispered to another.

"An auction like this also demonstrates the strength and wealth of one's clan. Sitting idle for four items... it's almost as if we are invisible."

Another elder nodded, concern creasing his brow.

"Young Master, perhaps you should bid on one of these. Even if it is not for personal use, showing our presence would remind everyone that the Bai Clan has the resources to dominate."

Bai Zihan's gaze remained calm, unfazed by the suggestions. His voice, when he spoke, was like smooth steel:

"I will bid when I find something that truly interests me. Until then, there's no need to waste anything."

The elders sighed, some reluctantly nodding.

They knew better than to push further; Bai Zihan's judgment had always been precise, and he was patient in a way that unnerved even the most seasoned clan leaders.

But there was also the thing that he didn't care much about the reputation which might bring some trouble later down the road.

From the Li Clan's section, Li Jianhong leaned back in his seat, his voice deliberately pitched loud enough to carry across the hall.

"Hmm... so the great Bai Clan doesn't even dare to bid?"

His lips curved into a thin smile.

"Perhaps their coffers have run dry. Or is it that their young master can only afford to look at treasures now?"

A few minor clan heads chuckled under their breath, quick to enjoy any jab aimed at the Bai Clan.

From his VVIP room, Bai Zihan's gaze shifted lazily toward Li Jianhong, his expression unreadable.

But when he spoke, his voice cut through the bidding calls with a clarity that left no room for mishearing.

"Running low?"

His lips curved faintly, almost bored.

"If the Bai Clan's coffers were truly empty, I'd simply buy the Li Clan and sell it for spare change. Though I doubt your Li Clan is even worth being my spare change."

The laughter from the Li Clan's allies died in their throats.

Gasps rippled through the hall.

A few braver souls tried to smother their grins, while others stared at Bai Zihan with a mix of awe and disbelief.

Indeed, rumors of Bai Zihan's sharp tongue weren't false at all.

Li Jianhong's smile froze, the corner of his jaw tightening as if to grind the words back into dust.

Li Jianhong's voice rose with scorn.

"Arrogant! A junior dares to be so obnoxious! I don't know what the Bai Clan teaches their young nowadays."

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened, his next words sliding out like a blade hidden in silk.

"Don't worry—at least they're taught well enough not to die like your son, Li Feng."

The name struck like thunder. The hall seemed to still for half a breath before murmurs erupted.

Li Jianhong shot to his feet, his qi flaring violently, killing intent flashing in his eyes.

"You—!"

He hadn't even come to account for his son's death yet, and Bai Zihan was already rubbing salt in the wound.

It would have been tolerable had Li Jianhong brought this up first—but for Bai Zihan, the killer himself, to mention it?

That only proved how little he cared for Li Jianhong.

With Li Jianhong's strength, there wasn't anyone here who could stop him if he made a move.

But before his rage could boil over into action, a hand gripped his arm firmly. An elder of the Li Clan leaned close, voice low but urgent.

"Clan Leader, control yourself. We have a mission here. That Heaven-Grade artifact must be secured. We can't waste this opportunity."

Li Jianhong's jaw tightened as he swallowed his fury, his glare never leaving Bai Zihan.

"Hmph!"

With a sharp turn, he sank back into his seat, forcing his attention toward the auction.

Lan Yuerong breathed in relief, seeing that the escalating situation had calmed down.

Similar sentiments were shared among other cultivators who would have been caught in the crossfire had Li Jianhong made a move.

Just then—

An item was brought out which didn't catch many eyes except for one or two that included Bai Zihan.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 246: Three Million Gold for a Broken Relic[ 1,528 words ]

*Chapter 246: Three Million Gold for a Broken Relic*

From the shadows of a private VIP room tucked into the upper tiers, a figure sat motionless, wrapped in a dark, hooded cloak.

Nie Fengzhuo's presence was like a still pond—calm on the surface, yet hiding unseen depths.

Only the faint glint in his eyes betrayed the spark of interest ignited within him.

Below, an attendant carried out a small, ornate bracelet resting on a silk cushion.

Its surface was weathered, faint etchings barely visible under the dim lantern light, yet the air around it seemed to ripple subtly—as though unseen waves were emanating from it.

Lan Yuerong's voice was clear, though tinged with deliberate reservation.

"This item, according to our appraisers, appears to be an ancient soul-nurturing artifact. While its exact grade cannot be confirmed, it is estimated to be around Earth-Grade in classification."

Her words drew polite but unimpressed murmurs.

To most cultivators present, an artifact that strengthened the soul was niche—useful, perhaps, for Alchemists, Formation Masters, or those walking dangerous soul cultivation paths, but hardly something worth fighting over when Heaven- and Earth-Grade treasures awaited.

Not to mention that it looked almost worn out and possibly not in good shape.

Several clan heads glanced over it, their eyes already shifting toward the next potential bid, dismissing this as an item put after a good treasure to earn some money.

But in Nie Fengzhuo's hooded shadow, his gaze locked onto the bracelet with unwavering intensity.

"Master, is this the artifact that can help you?"

Master Du Changsheng, he murmured silently in his mind.

"Yes! This is no ordinary trinket, boy. Its core is fractured, yes—but it was once part of a complete artifact that could temper a soul to withstand heavenly tribulation."

Nie Fengzhuo's lips curved faintly beneath the hood.

"Then it's mine!"

The auctioneer, still smiling professionally despite the disinterest in the crowd, made the customary opening call:

"The starting bid will be set at fifty thousand gold. Do I hear—"

"One million gold!"

The words were calm, but they rolled across the hall like a stone dropped into still water, sending ripples through the crowd.

Heads turned sharply toward the VIP balconies.

One million gold—for something that might not even work?

Even Lan Yuerong's brows arched slightly before she quickly masked it with a polite smile.

"Ah... one million gold from the esteemed guest in VIP Room Nine. Do we have another bid?"

A murmur of speculation spread through the audience.

Some scoffed, thinking the bidder was a fool.

Others frowned, realizing that if someone of that wealth wanted it so badly, perhaps there was more to the bracelet than met the eye.

But it could also be a trick from the Auction Hall to raise the price, so not many wanted to take the risk—especially when it involved one million gold.

From his VVIP room, Bai Zihan's gaze flicked upward toward the source of the voice.

He couldn't see through the shadows of the hooded figure, but he knew who would want this kind of artifact.

Apart from him, there was only one person he knew that would want something that could strengthen the soul.

Li Jianhong snorted audibly from his seat.

"To throw away gold like that... idiot," he muttered, though his eyes lingered on the bracelet with a touch of doubt.

Nie Fengzhuo, however, leaned back in his chair, his fingers tapping once on the armrest, waiting for his victory.

No immediate counter-offers came. The auctioneer's voice rang out once more, this time with sharper enthusiasm.

Anyway, this price is already 20 times more than what they thought they would fetch, so they don't have any problem giving it away.

"One million gold... twice! One million gold—"

"Two million!"

The voice was unhurried, deep, and unmistakable.

The auction hall froze. Dozens of heads swiveled toward the VVIP balcony belonging to the Bai Clan.

Even those who had been half-listening straightened in their seats.

Bai Zihan sat there in perfect composure, one hand resting lightly on the armrest, his gaze fixed lazily on the stage—as if the doubled price meant nothing to him.

Whispers erupted instantly.

"Two million? For that broken thing?"

"He has been quiet for the other powerful treasures but bid so high for such a broken item?"

"Has Young Master Bai gone mad?"

From behind the dark hood, Nie Fengzhuo's eyes narrowed. His hand, halfway to lowering the bid paddle, paused midair.

He had deliberately set his first offer so high—one million gold—to scare away opportunists and prevent needless competition.

No one sane would have gone higher for something so worn out.

Yet Bai Zihan had not only challenged him... he had doubled the price without hesitation.

A faint muscle in his jaw twitched.

(Does he... know?)

Master Du Changsheng's voice murmured in his mind, just as curious:

"Could it be this Bai Zihan recognizes the artifact's true core?"

But then shook his head. There was no way that was possible considering that information about the artifact is unknown and he also only vaguely heard about it.

Nie Fengzhuo's gaze darkened.

(Or perhaps... Bai Zihan had recognized me—and was deliberately making things difficult.)

This made much more sense than the first reason.

Still, no matter the reason, now he has to compete with Young Master Bai and he turns out to be quite a difficult opponent.

Directly raising the price to 2 million, double what he bid for.

On stage, Lan Yuerong's smile brightened considerably, sensing the tension like a predator catching the scent of blood.

"Two million gold from the Bai Clan! Do we hear another?"

Inside the shadowed VIP room, Nie Fengzhuo's fingers stilled on the armrest.

Two million!

It was already the limit of what he could muster, but for the sake of his master, he knew that he couldn't be stingy.

What he has now is all thanks to his master.

"2 million and hundre—"

Before he could even finish the sentence...

"3 Million!"

Bai Zihan directly raised the price to 3 million, equivalent to the price of Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique.

Silence!

Bai Zihan has been quiet all this time but when he bid, it was like he didn't even check his bank.

Even Li Jianhong who previously tried to mock Bai Zihan for being mock couldn't help but be confused.

(Just what was that artifact?)

Is it really that valuable or is Bai Zihan just bidding on whim?

No one could figure out but everyone knew that none could possibly offer more than him for the worn out bracelet.

Nie Fengzhuo's jaw almost fell off when Bai Zihan said 3 Million. He thought he could compete but that seemed to be out of reach for him.

Lan Yuerong's honeyed voice floated across the auction hall.

"Three million gold, going once!"

"Three million gold... going twice—"

Nie Fengzhuo watched reluctantly as the item which could help his master slip away in front of his eyes.

(Should I just steal it?)

For his master, he was willing to do anything. But that was even more impossible.

Stealing from Bai Zihan? Who was he kidding?

Better focus on Dragon and Phoenix Competition and perhaps exchange this bracelet with some other treasure with Bai Zihan.

He believes that Bai Zihan didn't know the artifact and just bided on a whim.

"Three million gold—sold!"

The gavel struck, and the hall erupted in a wave of applause and murmurs.

Up in the VVIP balcony, Bai Zihan's gaze remained on the stage, unreadable. Only the faintest curve at the corner of his lips betrayed his satisfaction.

In the shadows above, Nie Fengzhuo sat unmoving, the darkness around him seeming colder than before.

The bracelet was soon placed into a lacquered case and carried toward the Bai Clan's VVIP room.

Bai Zihan didn't even look at the servant as they presented it—he simply extended a hand, brushing his fingers across the weathered surface.

The faint ripples of energy pulsed like a distant heartbeat. Cold, yet strangely alive.

"Senior... what exactly is this thing?"

In the depths of his consciousness, the Immortal Emperor's Soul stirred. A voice, ancient and resonant, flowed into his mind, tinged with faint amusement.

"This is indeed an ancient soul-nurturing artifact. Once, it was called the Mirror of Nine Reflections. In its complete form, it could temper a cultivator's soul through nine cycles, each more perilous than the last."

Bai Zihan's eyes lowered slightly, the lamplight glinting off their depths.

"And now?"

"Now? Broken. A shadow of its former self. The core is fractured, its outer shell weathered. Still... even like this, it can nourish the soul, mend minor injuries, and sharpen spiritual sense over time."

Bai Zihan's fingers tapped lightly on the armrest. His tone was casual, but the question that followed carried an undercurrent of intent.

"Would it... help you recover?"

There was a brief silence within his mind, like an immortal pausing to weigh her words. Then—

"Yes! However, your Soul-Confining Artifact is better than this."

Bai Zihan's lips curved faintly. He closed the lacquered case and rested it beside him.

"Then, you can keep it! Anyways, it is better to have two Soul Nurturing Artifacts than one!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 247: An One-Man Auction[ 1,529 words ]

*Chapter 247: An One-Man Auction*

Meanwhile, on the stage, Lan Yuerong's smile remained dazzling as she gestured for the attendants to bring forth the next item.

"Congratulations to the Bai Clan for obtaining this unique treasure. May you find its true worth!"

Her voice rang clearly, smooth and magnetic.

"Distinguished guests, as you have seen, surprises await in every corner of this auction. Some treasures may seem plain, yet even the simplest stone may conceal hidden brilliance. And rest assured—what comes next will not disappoint!"

An attendant stepped forward, carrying a small lacquered box. With a careful flourish, it was opened, revealing a plain-looking silver ring.

"This is a storage ring," Lan Yuerong explained, "with a capacity ten times greater than the common kind. A useful tool for travelers, merchants, or warriors burdened with many artifacts. Its starting price is thirty thousand gold."

Murmurs of approval rose—storage space was always useful, but nothing revolutionary.

Before anyone could lift a paddle—

"Two hundred thousand!"

The voice rang from the Bai Clan's balcony once again.

The crowd froze again.

Several bidding guests who had been prepared to raise the price instantly lowered their hands, their faces tightening.

None dared to compete. Not only because of Bai Zihan, but also because the price itself has become too high.

Lan Yuerong's smile glimmered brighter.

"Two hundred thousand gold from the Bai Clan's honored guest!"

She announced, her clear voice carrying to every corner of the hall.

Her jade hammer lifted.

"Two hundred thousand—once!"

"Two hundred thousand—twice!"

"Two hundred thousand—thrice! Sold!"

The hammer struck down with a crisp sound.

"Congratulations once again to Young Master Bai for securing this fine treasure!"

Polite applause echoed, though more than a few glances carried thinly veiled shock.

The auction pressed on. One after another, attendants carried out treasures—rare herbs, precious ores, refined tools, and specialty talismans.

Though many were of decent quality, none reached the level of the earlier Earth-Grade artifact.

Yet, each time such treasure appeared, before the crowd could even breathe out their bids, Bai Zihan's calm voice rang out with startlingly high offers.

Earlier, a storage ring with unusually vast capacity—normally worth no more than fifty thousand—was seized for two hundred thousand under his unblinking gaze.

Then came a set of high-grade Explosive Talismans, their destructive force enough to threaten even a Void Refinement expert caught off guard.

Impressive, yes, but ultimately single-use. Still, Bai Zihan's voice cut cleanly across the hall:

"One hundred thousand!"

The room froze again.

They thought whoever put those items this time was very lucky, seeing that Bai Zihan was willing to pay such high prices for them.

And so it went. Each treasure, no matter how practical or situational, was snapped up by the Bai Clan's young master without hesitation, the sound of Lan Yuerong's hammer falling echoing like a drumbeat of domination.

"Sold! Congratulations once again to Young Master Bai!"

"Sold! Congratulations to the Bai Clan for their winning bid!"

Again and again, her voice rang out like a mocking chorus.

By now, Li Jianhong's face had darkened beyond recognition.

His earlier sneers about the Bai Clan's poverty felt like slaps against his own cheeks, each congratulation another sting.

Even the Bai Clan elders shifted uneasily in their seats. At first, they had been eager, pushing Bai Zihan to bid for worthy items to display their clan's strength.

But as the gold piled higher and higher on seemingly "useless" goods, their hearts clenched painfully.

This wasn't strength—it was extravagance. Wasteful. Madness.

Yet Bai Zihan never stopped.

It has turned from a previously bid war to a one person show.

His every bid was calm, assured, as though no amount of wealth mattered in the slightest.

"Ah, and the Bai Clan claims victory once more! One hundred thousand gold. Congratulations to Young Master Bai!"

The words, repeated again and again, fell like mocking slaps.

Li Jianhong's face burned hot and cold all at once.

Only a short while ago he had called the Bai Clan being poor and not able to compete with them.

Yet now, each extravagant bid struck him like a thunderclap—proof not of poverty, but of terrifying wealth.

He sat stiff, jaw clenched so hard it creaked, utterly unable to retort.

In the Bai Clan's balcony, several elders exchanged increasingly strained looks.

At first, they had urged Bai Zihan to compete, to prove their clan's standing. But now...

"Young Master, perhaps—perhaps restraint is needed..."

One ventured nervously.

While Bai Xueqing hardly criticized Bai Zihan for such reckless spending.

"Why squander so much gold on items of such little worth? The clan treasury is not without limits—"

But Bai Zihan sat unmoved, his presence as heavy as a mountain. His gaze was fixed only on the stage, his tone indifferent, final, like a decree.

"Useless or not, they're mine. Don't worry, I will personally pay for them myself! So, don't worry my dear sister."

The words silenced even his elders.

Bai Xueqing looked at Bai Zihan with doubt.

There was no way that he had that much money. Even if their parents loved him so much and gave him very large pocket money, Bai Zihan saving them wouldn't even reach a million.

Yet his spending has already crossed 4 Million gold.

But looking at how Bai Zihan seemed serious about paying it himself, she wondered just where he could've gotten all this money from.

"Hmph! You better not lie."

Bai Zihan already ignored his sister and focused on the next item as he once again bid a high price for it.

The attendants stepped forward once more, this time carrying a long case carved from black sandalwood.

When opened, a faint glow spilled out, revealing a fan of jade slips etched with ancient characters.

Lan Yuerong's smile brightened as she addressed the crowd.

The attendants carefully brought forward a long jade tray, draped in red silk. When the covering was lifted, gasps rippled through the hall.

Resting upon the tray was a pitch-black shield, no larger than a man's arm, its surface covered in mysterious runes that faintly shimmered with golden light.

Lan Yuerong's voice carried smoothly across the room.

"This is a rare defensive artifact. Though not complete, it was refined with fragments of celestial ore. When activated, it can withstand a single blow from even a Great Ascension Realm cultivator. However, it carries only two charges. Once spent, its light will fade forever. Starting price: Eight Hundred thousand gold~ !"

The crowd stirred. A treasure that could block the strike of such a terrifying realm was almost priceless—but with only two uses, it became a gamble.

To some, it was a lifesaving treasure worth any cost. To others, it was nothing more than an expensive trinket.

But well, most thought that before even thinking of needing to think whether to bid, they should see if Bai Zihan tries to buy it.

If so, no use of competing at all.

Zhao Wutian's lips curled upward. This was it—his clan's treasure that was set to sell here.

Not only was it bound to draw high bids, but with Bai Zihan recklessly throwing out gold, the profit would be immense.

He leaned back in his seat, smug anticipation in his eyes, and shifted his gaze toward the Bai Clan's balcony.

Sure enough, before long—

"One Million and five hundred thousand!"

Bai Zihan's voice cut across the hall once more, calm and commanding.

Zhao Wutian's heart leapt.

(As expected!)

Bai Zihan indeed has also bid for this treasure of his as well. He thought about just how high the final bid would be.

But, the hall fell utterly silent.

Not a single paddle was raised. Not a whisper of a competing bid.

All eyes swept toward the Bai Clan's balcony, waiting, watching, knowing full well that the outcome rested on Bai Zihan alone.

"One million and five hundred... once!"

Lan Yuerong's clear voice rang out.

"One million... twice!"

Zhao Wutian's fingers clenched on the armrest of his chair. A sheen of sweat gathered at his temple—from frustration.

If this continued, his clan's treasure would be sold for just a million and five hundred.

Although a profit, he obviously wants to make more from it especially since Bai Zihan is willing to pay for it.

The Bai Clan brat had been throwing gold recklessly all night, and yet now, when it truly mattered, he had chosen restraint?

No. He couldn't allow it.

"Two million!"

Zhao Wutian's voice cracked through the air like thunder.

The audience gasped. They thought that similar to Bai Zihan, Zhao Wutian has also lost his mind.

Of course, those who know that it was his own treasure that is up for auction, one would know that it's all a ploy to raise the price.

Lan Yuerong's expression did not falter, though even she blinked once in surprise.

Her gaze flicked toward Bai Zihan.

Everyone's gaze did.

Surely now, the young master of the Bai Clan would raise his voice again, calmly drowning out even such an outrageous bid?

But no words came.

Bai Zihan leaned lazily against the armrest, his expression cool, unbothered, not even sparing Zhao Wutian a glance.

Was Bai Zihan finally giving up?

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 248: Gold Spent, Intent Hidden[ 1,528 words ]

### *Chapter 248: Gold Spent, Intent Hidden*

The hall buzzed with speculation.

"Is he finally stopping?"

"Impossible... he's been throwing gold like water until now."

"Maybe even the Bai Clan has limits..."

"Perhaps his money has dried out from earlier bidding."

All eyes flicked back and forth between the poised auctioneer and the silent Bai Zihan.

Lan Yuerong lifted her hammer with practiced grace, her smile never faltering.

"Two million... once!"

The words reverberated like thunder in the tense stillness.

"Two million... twice!"

A hush fell over the crowd. Zhao Wutian's heart clenched. Panic surged in his chest.

(No—if it sold now, the Zhao Clan would not only lose potential profit but also pay the auction's commission for essentially buying back their own item.)

Desperate, his voice rang out, sharp and mocking:

"What's wrong, Young Master Bai? Have your pockets finally run dry? Or are you too afraid to spend for a treasure that can save your life? Surely, the great Bai Clan's heir isn't backing down now?"

The provocation cut through the silence, and many in the crowd leaned forward, eager to see Bai Zihan's reaction.

Finally, the young master stirred.

He leaned forward slightly, his eyes gleaming with faint amusement, his voice calm and dismissive:

"That artifact is worth no more than a million at best. Beyond that, it's a broken shield with only two breaths of life left in it. If you wish to waste two million on it, Zhao Wutian, then congratulations. You've bought yourself a coffin plank at twice its price."

The hall erupted. Some smothered chuckles, others exchanged knowing glances, but all eyes snapped to Zhao Wutian.

His face went red, then white, then an ugly shade of green.

He had wanted to provoke Bai Zihan into competing, to drive the price higher—but instead, he had been baited into cutting his own throat.

(This... this brat had just bid hundreds of thousands above market value for trinkets and baubles—storage rings, talismans, herbs—and now he chose to be wise? Refusing to bid on his clan's treasure?)

"Y-you—!"

He can't help but angry despite being the person who shot himself in the foot.

Lan Yuerong's smile glimmered, her jade hammer striking with finality.

"Two million... thrice! Sold! To the Zhao Clan! Congratulation!"

The crisp sound of the hammer falling struck Zhao Wutian's heart like a blade.

He had done it to himself.

The Zhao Clan's "victory" was hollow—paying an inflated two million for their own treasure, only to have the auction's commission cut into them further.

What should have been tidy profit had turned into a painful loss.

And the worst part? He had already won.

Bai Zihan's opening bid of one and a half million would have secured the sale handsomely. If only he had stayed quiet, he would be celebrating profit right now.

But now... he was the fool.

Zhao Wutian's face burned. His jaw tightened until it creaked, yet he forced his expression into a smug smile, raising his chin proudly, as though this had all been his plan.

"Yes," he said loudly, voice strained but steady, "a fitting treasure for my clan alone. Even Bai Clan stop us from acquiring what we want!"

But inside, his heart twisted. He had been played—no, toyed with—perhaps by himself.

But the auction did not pause for his wounded pride.

Lan Yuerong raised her jade hammer once again, her voice light and melodic as she gestured toward the attendants.

"This next item," she announced, her clear voice ringing out, "is none other than an Earth-Grade Artifact. A spear forged from thousand-year blacksteel, engraved with spirit-gathering runes, and tempered in the blood of a Grade-7 beast."

The chest opened with a low hum, revealing the weapon inside.

The blacksteel spear gleamed with a restrained light, its runes flickering faintly as if breathing.

The sharp aura it exuded made several cultivators in the front rows instinctively shift back.

Gasps rippled through the audience.

"Again? Just how many Earth-Grade Artifact did Grand Radiance Auction hall bring forth for today's auction."

"Sigh! Young Master Bai might snag this as well. I should have bid for the previous ones."

Finally, the items were once again on par with what was auction earlier but many felt that they might not be able to win it.

All eyes flicked upward—toward the Bai Clan's balcony.

If Bai Zihan had casually thrown away hundreds of thousands on trinkets, then surely—surely—he would not hesitate here.

Lan Yuerong's smile deepened knowingly.

"The starting price is Five hundred thousand gold."

A hush fell over the crowd. Dozens of gazes instantly swiveled toward the Bai balcony.

They waited.

And waited.

But the young master did not stir.

Instead, Bai Zihan leaned back in his seat, one arm resting lazily along the armrest, the other holding a wine cup. He tipped it lightly, savoring the taste, then set it down.

His eyes drifted shut, as though the Earth-Grade Artifact on display was beneath his notice.

A ripple of disbelief tore through the hall.

"What is he doing?"

"Don't tell me... he's not interested?"

"What's up with Young Master Bai? Frantically bidding for ordinary treasure but such precious treasure, he won't even look."

The auctioneer's practiced poise nearly faltered for the briefest instant.

But Lan Yuerong quickly smoothed her smile, her voice carrying bright and clear:

"Five hundred thousand! Do I hear a bid?"

"...Five hundred and fifty thousand!"

A hesitant voice called out.

Then waited for Bai Zihan to strike back. But still nothing.

"Six hundred thousand!"

Another immediately followed.

But the energy was strained, hesitant.

Every bidder's eyes kept flicking upward toward Bai Zihan, as if waiting for the inevitable crushing bid to sweep them aside.

And yet... nothing.

The young master sat there like an emperor in repose, eyes closed, utterly detached from the frantic bidding below.

Zhao Wutian clenched his fists, veins bulging in his temples. He couldn't make sense of it.

(Why is he not bidding? This is an Earth-Grade Artifact! Did the Bai Clan lose their mind? Or is he just toying with us again?)

The longer Bai Zihan remained still, the more unsettled the hall became.

To recklessly lavish millions on pills, herbs, and talismans... yet ignore a priceless artifact?

What game was he playing?

Bids surged at once.

"Seven hundred fifty thousand!"

"Eight hundred thousand!"

"Nine hundred thousand!"

On stage, the bids rose higher and higher. The Earth-Grade spear climbed past One Million, then Two Million.

"Two million and one hundred thousand!"

The final cry rang out, and Lan Yuerong's jade hammer fell.

"Sold!"

The blacksteel spear went to a middle-aged patriarch of a minor clan, his face pale with the weight of the sum.

But before the murmurs could die down, attendants stepped forward with yet another velvet chest.

"This next item," Lan Yuerong announced smoothly, "is also an Earth-Grade Artifact—an ancient battle halberd forged with twin cores of fire and lightning."

Gasps filled the hall.

The chest opened, revealing the halberd's faint crackle of lightning arcs along its edge. Its presence pressed on the hall like a stormcloud.

Everyone turned their heads upward, almost in unison.

The Bai VVIP Room!

But once again, Bai Zihan did not move.

He sat unmoving, eyes closed, as if the weapon didn't exist at all.

"...One million!" someone ventured cautiously.

"One point three million!"

"Two million!"

The bids soared. And yet, not a flicker of interest came from the Bai heir.

"Two million, five hundred thousand—sold!"

The next treasure came—an Earth-Grade Armor polished to gleaming brilliance.

Still no bid from Bai Zihan.

Then a sword, its aura sharp enough to cut the air.

Still no bid.

Again, and again, one priceless treasure after another, each drawing fervent competition, but Bai Zihan sat like a mountain, eyes half-lidded, his expression unreadable.

The silence from the Bai balcony became heavier than the bidding itself.

Whispers spread like wildfire.

"Could it be... he's already emptied his purse?"

"Didn't he throw away over five million already?"

"Hah... for all his arrogance, maybe he was just pretending. Now the Bai Clan can't even keep up!"

A few snickers rippled through the crowd, daring to mock under hushed tones.

But just when the speculation was at its peak, the attendants brought forth the next item—an exquisite talisman scroll.

Not an artifact. Not Earth-Grade. Merely a high-quality defensive talisman.

Lan Yuerong's lips curved as she announced the price:

"Starting bid, one hundred thousand gold."

And before anyone else could even open their mouths, Bai Zihan's calm voice drifted down from above:

"Three hundred and fifty thousand!"

The crowd froze.

Their laughter died in their throats.

Lan Yuerong's smile brightened, her hammer ringing crisply.

"Sold! To Young Master Bai."

Silence stretched through the hall, then the whispers began again—this time subdued, uncertain.

"So he does still have money?"

"Then why isn't he bidding on the previous powerful artifacts?"

"Impossible to tell... what is he thinking?"

But in the end, most gave up trying to divine his intentions.

At least now they were relieved.

If Bai Zihan wished to throw his gold away on baubles and scrolls, then let him.

What truly mattered—the Earth-Grade Artifacts—remained free of his crushing bids.

And that was enough.

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 249: The Necklace of Eternal Love[ 1,587 words ]

### *Chapter 249: The Necklace of Eternal Love*

The auction pressed on, treasures unveiled one after another.

To the great relief of many, Bai Zihan really didn't raise his hand for the Earth-Grade Artifacts and Techniques.

Not once did he bid for the Earth-Grade artifacts that appeared, allowing the other powers to compete freely without his shadow looming over them.

Meanwhile, in his VVIP Room, Bai Zihan leaned back casually, trying to calculate the money that he had earned.

All the Earth-Grade artifacts and techniques consigned under his name had already been sold, each fetching an average of two million gold.

Altogether, the sales had netted him nearly twenty million. Even after subtracting his earlier expenditures, his profits towered above imagination.

Of course, there was still one more item left—the true pinnacle of the evening. The Heaven-Grade artifact.

With that yet to be sold, Bai Zihan had no need to worry about anything as trivial as expenditure.

The auction was also coming to a close with the next being the second-to-last item of the evening.

Lan Yuerong, ever radiant, tapped her jade hammer lightly.

Her smile deepened as attendants carried forward a jade box of extraordinary craftsmanship, its surface inlaid with intricate lotus motifs.

Her voice softened, melodic, carrying a subtle warmth that drew the hall into quiet reverence.

"Ladies and gentlemen... our second-to-last item of today's grand auction is not merely an artifact—it is a piece of history, a token of love that has survived the centuries."

The box opened, and inside lay a necklace of delicate silver threads interwoven with luminous pearls.

At its center, a single crimson gem pulsed faintly, as though alive.

A soft, soothing aura spread from it, not sharp like weapons, not firm like armor, but gentle—like an embrace.

Lan Yuerong continued, her tone laced with romantic allure:

"This Earth-Grade Artifact is called the Heart's Bond Necklace. Forged three thousand years ago, it was a gift from the Great General Yun to his beloved, Lady Qiu, whom he married against the will of their clans. Legend says that as long as the necklace was worn, their hearts would remain linked—no matter life or death, distance or time."

She continued.

"When General Yun fell in battle, Lady Qiu is said to have felt the shattering of his heart through this very gem. She perished not long after, but her final smile was serene, for she knew he had been hers until the end."

A hush fell. Even the most hardened warriors found their chests heavy at the tale.

"This artifact is not famed for its might on the battlefield," Lan Yuerong admitted softly, "but for its symbolism. Lovers across the generations have sought it, desiring to prove their devotion through a treasure that once witnessed eternal love."

The crimson gem shimmered faintly, casting a rosy glow that seemed to warm the coldest of souls.

"This necklace," Lan Yuerong said, raising her hand gracefully, "is a true treasure of love. A piece for the heart rather than the sword. The starting bid... is five hundred thousand gold."

Silence stretched for a moment, then—

"Five hundred thousand!"

A voice rang out from a balcony where a wealthy merchant sat with his wife, his hand clutching hers tightly.

"Six hundred thousand!"

Another followed from the lower floor, a young heir flushed with emotion, stealing glances at the veiled lady beside him.

The hall began to stir. For once, bids were not driven by greed for power, but by yearning hearts and whispered dreams.

All the while, as the red glow of the necklace danced across the hall, dozens of eyes once again drifted upward.

Toward Bai Zihan.

Would he... bid for this as well?

But the Bai heir only swirled the wine in his cup, lips curving faintly, as if amused by the romance that ensnared the hall.

The bids climbed higher.

"Eight hundred thousand!"

"Nine hundred thousand!"

Seated in the VVIP room, Bai Zihan swirled his cup lazily, watching the hall erupt with sentimental fervor.

Then—

Poke.

A soft nudge at his arm.

He turned, brows arching.

"What is it, my dear sister?"

Bai Xueqing leaned forward, her eyes gleaming mischievously. She tilted her chin ever so slightly towards Chu Ziyuan.

She sat there quietly, her figure refined, her bearing calm and dignified as ever.

Even in the glow of the necklace's crimson light, she betrayed no outward desire. Yet Bai Xueqing's meaning was obvious.

Bai Zihan blinked.

"...You want me to buy it? For her?"

"Of course," Xueqing whispered with a grin. "What kind of man lets such a treasure of love slip by when his fiancée is watching?"

Bai Zihan frowned, honestly puzzled.

"Why? You know our marriage is for convenience."

At those words, a weary sigh echoed in his mind.

The figure of the Emperor Soul Feilian manifested, shaking his head as though deeply disappointed.

"Bai Zihan, Bai Zihan... you really don't understand women's hearts. Power and duty bind them, yes—but even a bond of convenience can be softened, deepened, if you show sincerity. A girl wishes to be cherished, not simply carried along the currents of fate. Try harder to win her heart."

Bai Zihan's expression darkened slightly.

"I've no interest in lectures about romance."

But wanting to silence both his sister's insistent eyes and the Emperor Soul's nagging tone, Bai Zihan finally lifted his hand.

"Three million!"

The words rolled out carelessly, but they struck the hall like thunder.

Gasps exploded from every corner. The price leapt past all expectations, leaving no room for competition.

Silence fell heavy as the hammer in Lan Yuerong's hand froze mid-air, her eyes flashing with quiet delight at the scene.

In an instant, every gaze shifted upward once more.

The hall went still. For a long breath, no one dared raise their paddles.

Then the whispers began.

"Ah, Young Master Bai is bidding for it!"

"Of course—it must be for his fiancée. Who else could it be?"

"Hah... to spend so much without batting an eye, just for a necklace of love... if only I were in her place."

"Envious? I could die of it. Imagine, a single bid worth more than what we'll earn in ten lifetimes, and all for a woman's smile."

"Bai Zihan truly is unmatched... not only powerful and rich, but he even treats his betrothed like this."

Up in the VVIP, Chu Ziyang lowered her gaze, looking at Bai Zihan.

She would have liked it more if Bai Zihan truly intended to give this to her with his heart but knew better.

At least, to the eyes of the crowd, she was now the most blessed woman in the Empire.

Three million!

Lan Yuerong's eyes gleamed as she lifted her jade hammer. Her voice rang, honey-smooth but firm.

"Three million going once!"

The crowd held its breath. Some were still waiting for a competitor to show up—but who would?

Even for an Earth-Grade Artifact, most of them only wanted to spend around two million, and going above it required serious thought.

Not to mention, those who had a lot of money to spend still needed to think about the last item that was going to be auctioned.

The Heaven-Grade Artifact!

To win that, they needed to save their money.

"Going twice!"

Every pair of eyes strained upward toward Bai Zihan's VVIP room.

"—Sold!"

The jade hammer fell with a crisp clack, sealing the bid.

Lan Yuerong's smile deepened, her voice carrying like silk over the hush.

"Congratulations, Young Master Bai. To claim such a treasure of love—how enviable indeed."

Her gaze lingered meaningfully on his VVIP Room, before she inclined her head with grace.

Applause thundered through the hall, not only for the conclusion of the bidding, but for the romance that everyone assumed had just unfolded.

Moments later, attendants ascended the staircase with utmost care, carrying the jade box cradled in silk.

They bowed deeply as they presented it to Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan took the box with casual ease, as though three million gold was a trivial matter, no more than a drop of rain on the ocean of his wealth.

He turned, the crimson light of the necklace gleaming faintly within the open lid.

Chu Ziyang sat there quietly.

Bai Zihan extended the box toward her. His tone was unhurried, unflustered, almost indifferent.

"This is yours."

For a heartbeat, her composure wavered. The faintest trace of warmth flickered in her eyes as she accepted the necklace with delicate hands.

She lowered her gaze, but a smile—gentle and radiant—curved her lips.

"Thank you!"

"Don't mention it."

Bai Zihan replied as he went back to his seat.

Well, for him, the auction had ended, and the last item was only for counting his money.

The auction reached its peak, the hall charged with restless energy. Every breath, every glance, carried the same question—what would the final treasure be?

Everyone knew it was a Heaven-Grade Artifact. But what kind of artifact?

Lan Yuerong's jade hammer tapped once, sharp and clear, cutting through the murmur.

"The moment you've all been waiting for has arrived," she announced, her smile radiant, her tone solemn.

Attendants stepped forward, carrying a long jade case bound with golden talismans, each shimmering faintly with celestial light.

With a graceful flick of her hand, the seals dissolved, and the case opened—revealing a fan whose feathers gleamed with colors of starlight and dawn, its presence alone making the hall fall silent.

Lan Yuerong's voice rang out, crisp and resounding.

"Ladies and gentlemen... we bring you the Celestial Feather Fan!"

## Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 250: Celestial Feather Fan Auctioned! [ 1,587 words ]

### *Chapter 250: Celestial Feather Fan Auctioned!*

The moment Lan Yuerong's words fell, the Grand Radiance Auction Hall shuddered with shock.

The Celestial Feather Fan!

"That's—impossible!"

"It... it belongs to Bai Zihan, doesn't it?"

"Yes! He got it from the Zhao Clan!"

"Why... Why is it here?! Is Bai Zihan auctioning it?"

The shimmering feathers reflected faint starlight, exuding a noble, divine presence.

It was an artifact spoken of in awe, a Heaven-Grade treasure whose origin stretched back to the Zhao Clan's history.

The hall erupted in uproar, all eyes snapping toward the Zhao Clan's VVIP Room.

Zhao Wutian's face darkened immediately, his jaw tight, fists trembling with suppressed fury.

Beside him, Zhao Chen looked as though he had swallowed poison, his expression pale yet burning with humiliation.

The Celestial Feather Fan—an artifact their clan had treasured for generations—now stood on public display as someone else's property, ready to be sold off before the entire empire.

Zhao Wutian's killing intent surged, rattling the air. His voice thundered, low and venomous:

"Bai Zihan!"

Yet Bai Zihan didn't so much as twitch.

He sat lazily in his VVIP Room, swirling tea in his cup, as if the drama below had nothing to do with him.

Meanwhile, even the Bai Clan's own elders looked unsettled. One of them leaned forward, his voice respectful, carefully restrained.

"Zihan'er... this Celestial Feather Fan is a priceless treasure, a Heaven-Grade artifact. Why... Why auction it away? Would it not be better to keep it within the Bai Clan?"

Even if it wasn't of any use to them, at least their enemy couldn't make use of it, and that alone was already a great advantage.

While what Bai Zihan did with his treasure was beyond their control, they at least hoped that he could see the bigger picture.

If money was what Bai Zihan wanted, they could have prepared it themselves in order to keep the Heaven-Grade Artifact within the Clan.

Bai Zihan leaned forward, his smile faint but his tone loud enough for every soul in the hall to hear.

"A waste!"

The word dropped like a thunderbolt.

Gasps rippled across the hall.

Bai Zihan's voice was casual, dismissive, looking down on the artifact.

"This Celestial Feather Fan? Useless. Not even worthy to sit in my storage ring. Better to sell it off than let it take up space."

Gasps swept the crowd.

To belittle a Heaven-Grade artifact in such a way—was he mad? Some whispered that Bai Zihan was insulting his own auction item.

But no one missed the deeper sting.

The Celestial Feather Fan was not just any artifact—it was the Zhao Clan's symbol more than Bai Zihan's.

Even if Bai Zihan had gotten it, most people would associate the artifact with the Zhao Clan rather than him.

By calling it worthless, Bai Zihan wasn't insulting the fan at all. He was insulting the Zhao Clan itself for revering it.

The Zhao Clan's faces flushed crimson with rage.

Bai Zihan sneered faintly.

"Perhaps... I made a mistake. Auctioning it is giving it too much honor. Should have sold it to a street vendor."

The insult was clear, sharp as a blade.

The hall trembled with tension.

"BAI ZIHAN!"

Zhao Wutian roared, rising to his feet, veins bulging across his forehead.

Zhao Chen too could barely contain himself, his face twisted with fury.

"This fan is ours!"

He shouted, voice cracking. "Anyone who dares bid against the Zhao Clan will be making an enemy of us!"

The entire hall fell silent.

Many who had been preparing to bid froze, their palms slick with sweat.

The lure of a Heaven-Grade artifact was immense, but to oppose the Zhao Clan directly? Few dared risk it.

Lan Yuerong's radiant smile dimmed for the first time. Her delicate brows knit together, and her voice—though still melodic—carried a sharp edge.

"Zhao Patriarch, this is the Grand Radiance Auction Hall. I must ask you to please refrain from disrupting the proceedings."

Her tone was ice beneath silk.

"Hmph!"

Zhao Wutian gave a cold snort, his killing intent still thick in the air.

He did not argue further, but the venom in his eyes made clear that his warning to the hall still stood.

Lan Yuerong exhaled lightly, regaining her flawless poise. She raised her jade hammer.

"The Celestial Feather Fan. A Heaven-Grade artifact. The starting bid—three million gold!"

The words had barely left her lips before Zhao Wutian's voice thundered again.

"Three million!"

His bid was instant, his glare sweeping the entire hall like a blade, silently reminding everyone of his earlier words: Bid, and you are the Zhao Clan's enemy.

The hall shivered beneath the weight of his aura. Many swallowed hard, their earlier ambitions retreating in fear.

But not all.

"Heaven-Grade artifact? Only three million? Hah! Does the Zhao Clan think they can buy back their dignity so cheaply?"

A deep, rumbling voice called out from another VVIP Room, and the bid instantly jumped higher.

"Four million!"

The hall trembled with excitement.

Everyone's eyes snapped toward the source—it was the Crimson Thunder Palace!

Their elder reclined easily in his seat, lightning sparking faintly around his body.

And then, almost immediately—

"Five million!"

The words came from yet another VVIP Room. This time, it was the Heaven Sword Sect.

Elder Qinglan didn't really want the Celestial Feather Fan, but if it was for five million, then it would be worth it.

Of course, knowing that the artifact belonged to her disciple, she was also helping raise its price—and there was nothing that Zhao Wutian could do to stop her.

Clearly, there were forces here who had no fear of the Zhao Clan—or who simply desired to see them humiliated further.

Zhao Wutian's entire body trembled, rage boiling so fiercely it was almost tangible. His teeth ground together as he forced out his next bid:

"Six million!"

His voice cracked like thunder, shaking the hall.

But Elder Qinglan of the Heaven Sword Sect merely arched a brow, her lips curving faintly.

"Seven million!"

The bid landed like a sharp slap across Zhao Wutian's face.

Zhao Wutian's knuckles whitened, his palm trembling with fury as he raised it again.

"Eight million!"

"Nine million!"

Elder Qinglan's voice came smoothly, almost lazily, as though she were merely toying with him.

By now, everyone understood. The Heaven Sword Sect had no intention of winning the fan—they were simply driving Zhao Wutian to madness.

The Crimson Thunder Palace has also given up. The price was too high for them to bid.

Finally—

"Ten million!"

Zhao Wutian's roar shook the beams of the auction hall. His chest heaved, his veins bulged, and his expression was twisted with fury.

Elder Qinglan stopped.

Seven million... that was the limit I was told for the Heaven-Grade Artifact. If, by chance, it could be secured under that amount, it would have been a fine addition to their sect.

But it was only a fan—not suitable for their sect. For her sect, what they truly desired was a sword. For that, they would be willing to push as high as ten million.

So she had pressed the bidding to nine million—although disobeying her instructions, but within reason. Enough to stir the waters, to force the Zhao Clan's hand.

Her gaze slid toward Zhao Wutian's VVIP room, a faint curve touching her lips.

(The Zhao Clan will never allow this artifact to leave their grasp. They are desperate and humiliated. Even if the price soars, they will bleed themselves dry to reclaim it.)

With that thought, she had pushed the bid to 10 Million.

Lan Yuerong's hammer struck down.

"Sold! The Celestial Feather Fan, to the Zhao Clan—ten million gold!"

The hall erupted in gasps and whispers.

Ten million! Enough to purchase dozens of sect-protecting treasures, enough to fund entire armies.

And all of it, flowing straight into Bai Zihan's pocket.

Zhao Wutian's face was as dark as ink, his heart dripping blood. Though he had reclaimed the Celestial Feather Fan, the victory felt like swallowing poison.

In the eyes of the world, the Zhao Clan had been humiliated, forced to pay an astronomical price to buy back what had always been theirs.

His sleeve flared as he rose abruptly, his killing intent spilling forth like a flood.

"Bai Zihan..." he muttered, his voice low, venomous, each syllable a promise of death. "This... this humiliation—I will remember it."

He turned on his heel and strode from the hall, Zhao Chen following close behind, his face still pale with fury and shame.

The other guests whispered among themselves, their gazes flickering between the departing Zhao Clan and the calm, languid figure in the Bai Clan's VVIP Room.

Bai Zihan did not so much as glance after Zhao Wutian.

He swirled his cup of tea, his expression unchanging—like threatening has done anything to him?

Lan Yuerong, ever poised, lifted her jade hammer once more.

"With that, ladies and gentlemen," her voice rang out like a heavenly bell, "our Grand Radiance Auction has reached its conclusion!"

She bowed lightly, her jeweled sleeves fluttering.

"On behalf of the Grand Radiance Auction Hall, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all esteemed guests who have graced us today with their presence."

"We sincerely congratulate those who secured treasures this day. May fortune and destiny favor you in your cultivation. And to those who bid but did not win—do not be disheartened."

She raised her slender hand with practiced grace.

"For the Grand Radiance Auction shall return. Greater treasures, rarer opportunities, and perhaps... even more surprises await!"